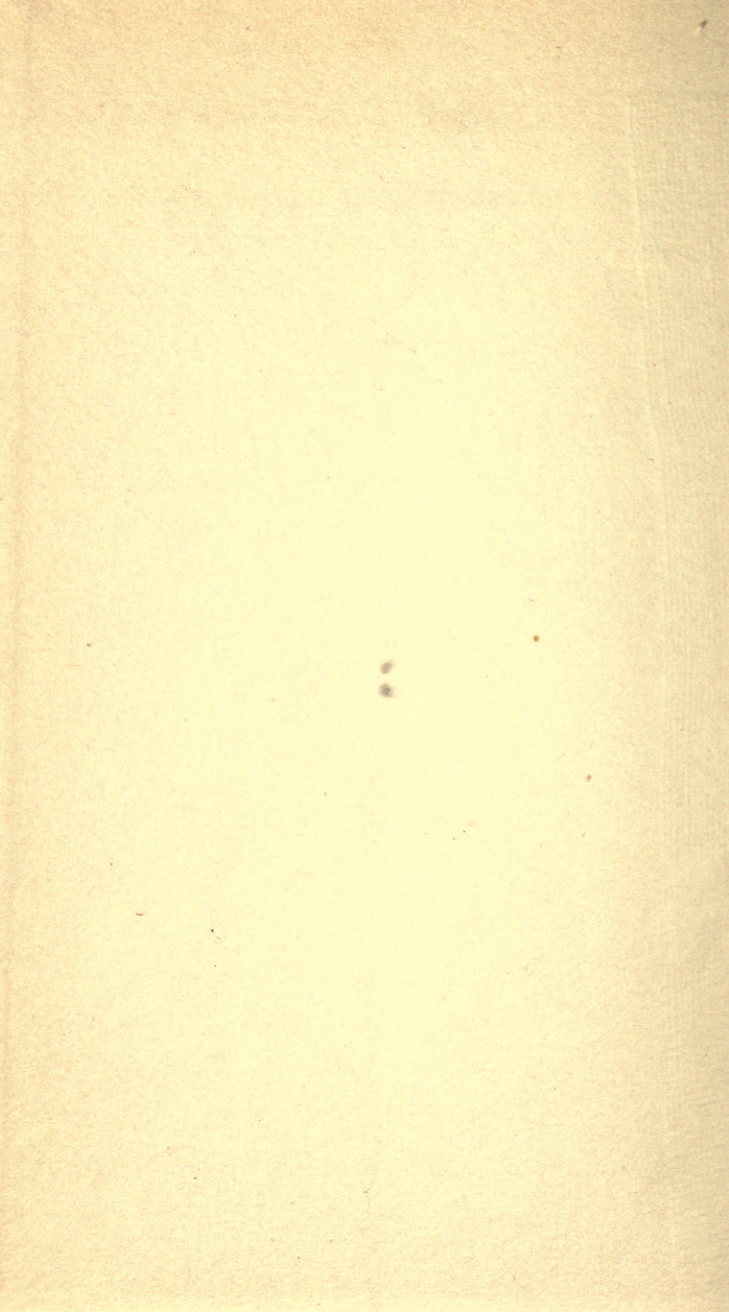


A Georgian Actress
Pauline Bradford Mackie



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Act II.

PHILASTER, or
LOVE-LIES-A-BLEEDING

Sc. III.



MISS ANN JOHNSON as ROSE
Rose *Was it you he rescued?*

London, Printed for Drury Lane Theatre, Nov. 9, 1774.

A Georgian Actress

A Georgian Actress

By

Pauline Bradford Mackie

(Mrs. Herbert Müller Hopkins)

Author of

"Mademoiselle De Berny," "Ye Lyttle Salem
Maide," etc.

Illustrated by

E. W. D. Hamilton



BOSTON

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TO MY BROTHERS

Andrew Percy and Cecil Denniston Mackie

THIS STORY IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED

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A Georgian Actress

Chapter I

“**M**ADAME,” said Ann, “tell me of that England which lies over the sea where Peggy and I are to go some day.”

Madame, stepping back from the embroidery-frame that she might draw with freedom the shining length of fine silk through the linen, replied monotonously: “It is a fertile country, surrounded by the sea —”

“I know all that,” interrupted Ann, eagerly, “but tell me of the people. Bethink you, I have seen no man’s face save my father’s unless you would observe the Indians. No gentlewoman have I known other than yourself. Oh, how often at night have I stood lonely at my

window and put forth my arms. ‘Even so, dear moon,’ I say, ‘do you shine white upon that mighty Rome of which I read, and in your light do lovers walk.’ I think of *Romeo and Juliet*, which play, Madame, affects me profoundly, so that I sigh to myself, yet not all for pain. But when the sun shines I think of England and the children playing in the meadows. I think I should be most content to frolic awhile with the little English children. I would tease them, but only very lovingly, and then I would make daisy-wreaths for them such as I have read about. I think the children must be sweeter than flowers even.”

Madame, matching the silk for the yellow heart of a rose, did not reply. The sunlight fell aslant the rich border of the cloth. Amidst loving lavishness of gold thread she laid in stitches in clear scarlet, green, purple, and blue.

The blue was as the sky at noon and the purple soft as the twilight. The green held the greenness of the emerald spring. But the beauty of the scarlet colour thrilled her afresh whenever she drew the

cover from the frame to recommence work. She herself had sown and tended the flax, gathered and spun it and bleached the threads, that this cloth for the altar might be the labour of her own hands. In the centre, where the service of the Holy Sacrament should repose, she would embroider a lamb in silk of the whiteness that gleams like silver.

“I beg that you will urge upon my father the necessity of taking us soon to England,” ventured Ann, timidly.

Madame’s hands shook so that she threaded her needle with difficulty. “How many times have I told you, Ann, that it is best to desire naught, neither pleasure nor power, neither wisdom nor love. Pleasure will burn to ashes; power is a delusion; wisdom is vanity. As for love, lo, love is emptiness.”

“I will have pleasure,” cried Ann, pursing her lips obstinately. “As for power, that suffices for men. Neither care I for wisdom, which might grow irksome. But as for love, — why, love is pleasure.”

“Love is pain,” said her companion.

"Then love is pain and pleasure," persisted she, gaily.

"The pain remains," ended Madame, sternly.

Ann's mouth quivered. "You make me afraid when you talk so. Why should I wish to live if all is as you say?" She rose and stood looking out of the window.

Never had there been known such an autumn in the valley.

"It is the smoke from old Maushope's pipe," said the Indians, as the hazy air grew bluer, filling the forest gaps with purple. Morning after morning the sun came up copper-coloured and the delicate hoar-frost vanished like a breath. Each moment of the magic days seemed deliciously prolonged. The tangled branches of the blackberry and the sumac's velvet plumes flamed along the byways and the outskirts of the forest. There was the soft, incessant sound of falling leaves and the bursting of puff-balls, and, more distinct, the patter of nuts dropping, while louder yet rose the chattering of the squirrels. Flocks of birds drifted slowly southward.

Far as her gaze could reach Ann saw but the great forests, — her prison walls.

Through the dusky green of the pines showed the brilliant hues of the changing maple, the butternut, and hickory trees.

“Of all things,” she said aloud, with a defiant glance over her shoulder at her companion, “of all things, I hate trees.”

All the beauty of the autumn forest she beheld with listless eyes; to all its mysterious melody she turned unheeding ears. Beyond, beyond, lay the world.

Her sewing slipped from her fingers to the garden below. Indifferent to its fate, she watched with unseeing eyes the waving tree-tops. Her face suddenly brightened. She turned impulsively and knelt beside Madame, who, wearied by long standing before the embroidery-frame, had seated herself.

“Dear Madame,” coaxed the girl, “why will you never speak to me of my mother and forbid that I should even mention her name to my father? What would you think if I told you that I knew, that I had guessed, the reason why?” She held

her head back, looking up into the other's face, her eyes bright with mischievous spirit, her smile arch as that of one who had surprised a delightful secret. "Is it not because she was such a great and beautiful lady that you fear to tell me lest I should become vain of her memory and grow to care for worldly things? Ah, you would reprove me if you but knew how precious is the thought of her. I picture to myself how, when Peggy and I go out into the world, those who knew our mother will whisper when our backs are turned. And though I shall hear them not, yet shall I know what they say. And if either of us looks good in their eyes they will say: 'She has somewhat of her mother's beauty.' And should one of us, by a lucky chance, address them with some poor grace of speech, they will smile and exchange glances and think: 'Now is her mother's brave wit hers.' Then shall I be happy. It will be as I now think. My mother's love, which here I never knew, awaits me in the world. For that love she

gave her friends will spring to life again in their hearts when they see her daughters. Thus will her memory rise to meet and bless us in the world. Ah, dear Madame, tell me who my mother was ! ”

Madame seldom accorded Ann a caress, yet now she stroked the rounded cheek.

“ And sometimes I have thought,” continued the girl, encouraged, “ that perhaps you were her companion, watched over her as you do over Peggy and me, saw that what she wore became her beauty, your fingers plaited her long and shining hair — ”

A strange smile flitted over the older woman’s face.

It chilled Ann, who rose slowly to her feet, half-frightened. “ Perchance I should not have asked you,” she faltered, “ perchance I do presume.”

“ Have I ever failed in my duty to you ? ” asked Madame.

Ann’s white throat swelled with an unuttered sob. The tears rushed to her eyes. She shook her head, not trusting herself to speak, and hurried from the

room. She went down-stairs into the garden lying back of the castle. The high brick walls of this garden stretched well into the forest, seeming to push back the trees that crowded jealously forward and thrust long arms over the coping. A brook strayed across one corner and out again, and there a grotto had been built. Closely trimmed box bordered the flower beds and winding paths. There were no shade-trees because the shadow of the forest, varying with the position of the sun, always fell across some part of it. But there were a few fruit-trees and grape and honeysuckle arbours. In the spring the tulip beds planted by the High Dutch girl, and tended so sacredly by her daughters, burst into gorgeous bloom.

The negro women had some time since gathered the grapes and made them into wine and preserves for the long winter. But here and there a bunch, overlooked, had reached the perfection of ripeness and hung, a purple-black cluster with a wine-like ray where the sun shone through. Here Ann paused and ate

some of the grapes. Then picking the largest bunch in reach, she followed a path that led to the far corner of the garden. There she found her sister.

“You are grown too great a girl to play with dolls, Peggy,” she said, austere, “bethink yourself that we shall soon go forth into the world where it behoves us to be nimble-witted through much learning to cope with what shall befall us therein, for by lack of knowledge, as well as inexperience, we may appear most strange and foolish in others’ eyes.”

The little sister, seated on the ground, one doll clasped to her breast, glanced up wistfully.

“Dear Ann,” she entreated, “suffer me just this afternoon to play with them and to-morrow I will read with you.”

“I fear you like books none too well,” sighed Ann; “here are some grapes for you. They are, indeed, sweeter than honey.” As she walked away she fell a-day-dreaming, and her tears of a moment ago were forgotten.

Left alone, Peggy began crooning an Indian lullaby to the doll in her arms. Turning after awhile to lay it down, she saw that a drift of leaves had been blown with mysterious suddenness over her other children propped in a row against the wall.

As she began to brush the leaves away she heard the cawing of a crow in the pines outside.

“Caw,” she mocked, “caw-caw-caw. You are an idle chatterer, Jokawe!”

“Caw, caw,” came the answer from the pine-trees.

Peggy picked up a stick. “Caw,” she mimicked, “idle chatterer. Go home to your wife and children, Jokawe.” She flung the stick high up among the branches and looked to see the shining black body of Jokawe rise and circle away into the blue sky.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet with a cry of terror. High in the branches a laughing face appeared.

“Who are you?” she cried.

The face vanished. There came no



"PEGGY BEGAN CROONING AN INDIAN LULLABY."

reply to her question. The boughs rustled.

A moment later a young man swung from the branches and seated himself on the wall.

"Who are you?" she repeated.

"I am Jokawe," mocked the stranger, "Jokawe, the crow-man who teaches the young crows caw-caw."

Peggy stared up at him gravely. Her fear had passed, for she saw he was but a man as her father was, and belonged to that far world of which Ann talked so much. Moreover, she knew he was not Jokawe, the crow-man. For Jokawe had black wings instead of arms.

"Wait you still," she said, "whilst I go get Ann."

"No, no," cried he, "do not run away. I'll tell you who I am."

The little maid's rosy mouth was firmly set. "I will go get Ann," she repeated.

"Very well, then," he threatened, "when you return with her I shall be gone. I shall have turned into a crow and flown away. Caw!" He pointed to

her dolls. "Your children will get cold if you uncover them. 'Twas I who flung down the leaves."

Peggy knelt quickly and spread her arms over her dolls.

He laughed. "I have watched you often ; sometimes I have flung down nuts and you have thought it a squirrel. And I have whistled. Listen," putting his fingers to his mouth.

Was there a mocking-bird in the leaves above? Ah, the melody, the sweetness !

As he ceased, Peggy raised her hand. "Hush," she whispered.

Faintly from far-off forest depths, rising infinitely high and sweet and as softly dying away, came the answering song.

"Do you not know me?" asked the young man. "Look close."

"I know you not," she said.

"Try once again," he begged. "Why, fie on you, little maid, that you cannot read my features. Bear I no likeness to your father?"

Peggy, gazing with all will to please, laughed and put up her arms. "Ann,"

she cried, "Ann!" Yet even as the name left her lips her arms fell. "Who are you?" she whispered, frightened.

"I," he mocked, "I am Ann."

"Ann," said the little maid, piteously, "it is not you." The tears came to her eyes. "Ann," she added, faintly, "it grieves me sorely if this be you."

"Caw-caw," he mimicked, "I am not Ann. I am Jokawe the crow-man, and my wife has one white wing and one black, but mine are both black and shining."

Peggy stooped and gathered up her dolls. She made several steps blindly for the tears in her eyes.

A hand was laid on her shoulder: the tantalising voice, grown gentle, spoke in her ear. "Forgive me, sweetheart, and look up. See, I am not Ann, but like Ann because I am her brother. Do not cry, I but jested. Am I not your brother as well as hers?"

Peggy smiled through her tears. "Oh, now I know," she cried, "you are Ann's and my brother in that strange world of

which she talks so much. Can you tell me if we shall find many brothers in that world? ”

“ But one,” he answered, “ as I, though I hunt the wide world o’er, shall find but two sisters. I am just come home from London, where I was knighted by his Majesty. But let us sit down on the grass here behind these rose-bushes, that we be not observed, and I will tell you more.”

An hour passed. The breeze, beginning to freshen toward sunset, rippled the grass at their feet. Now and then Peggy shifted the position of the dolls in her arms. She was an entranced listener. For the first time she had forgotten Ann.

At the castle the negroes prepared supper.

Madame Van Vrankin had retired to the chapel to pray at this hour, as was her custom.

In the semi-darkness of the drawing-room Ann sat at her spinet, playing all she loved best to comfort herself for her recent tears.

Chapter II

ANN, unclosing happy eyes at sunrise the next morning, lay quietly. What sweet and delicious experience had been hers in sleep, that her waking soul still thrilled to the pleasure of it? Fretting at last at the vain effort of memory to recall it, loath to pass from the fleeting dream to meet the sober day, she turned on her pillow to sleep again. But soon she raised herself restlessly to look out of the window and observe the weather. The movement brought her in line with the bar of red sunlight, which, falling across the coverlid, now streamed upon her slim body in its white nightrobe and the braid of black hair.

Terunda, the green parrot, sleeping on a footpost of the ponderous bed, was also bathed in this refulgent light.

"Wake up, Peggy," cried Ann, "and see how strange the morning is."

Peggy stirred in her sleep and flung out one arm. "I shall be your little mother," she murmured.

"Now why will you be my little mother?" coaxed Ann.

But Peggy, not thus to be beguiled into speaking, wakened.

"You were talking in your sleep," laughed Ann. "See how copper-coloured the light is this morning, more than ever."

Peggy slipped out of bed and went over to the window. The sun, a fiery ball, hung low in a gray sky. The forest in the valley moved in waving undulations like the sea. "It is a storm sun," she announced; "see how a mist creeps over it. And did you notice how the moon last night held water and tipped so that a hunter could have hung his bow on the horned end?" She put up her hand and stroked Terunda, who had fluttered over and perched himself on her shoulder. "We shall have no more warm days now."

Peggy's prophecy came true.

The long and delicious Indian summer was past. A damp and chilling wind arose and blew continuously, and the sun never showed its face from behind the gray mist.

The first fire was lighted in the drawing-room, and Madame Van Vrankin, ever sensitive to the cold, sat shivering in front of it.

All that bleak afternoon Ann sat on the hall window-seat, the heavy curtains drawn around her for warmth, while she read Rollins's *Ancient History*, her vivid imagination colouring the dull text; read until her cheeks burned with excitement and her fingers grew cold from the bitter wind pouring in the window-cracks; read until the twilight crept between her and the printed pages and the faintly tinged clouds of the cold sunset took on the form of her dreams.

Peggy lingered in the garden unmindful of her dolls. She waited in vain the coming of yesterday's guest. She confided no word of the adventure to Ann, not in

obedience to a well-thought-out reason, but because she was by nature most secretive. After supper she sought the old Indian Naukoska, who kept the castle gate.

“Naukoska,” she asked, “what are the pines saying to-night? Hear how they are talking, so loud!”

Old Naukoska took his pipe from his mouth and raised his head to listen. “They are singing the tale of *The Wolf-brother*,” he said, after awhile.

“Repeat it to me,” begged the little maid, wistful to be beguiled from her disappointment.

“The trees say it is a wild night,” spoke Naukoska, in the Indian language which Peggy understood, “and that the wildness of the night makes them remember the story of *The Wolf-brother*, for whenever the wind moans, its voice brings to mind a tale that is sad.”

“I should prefer a merry tale to-night, Naukoska,” said the little maid, pleadingly, “one that will make me laugh.”

“Nay;” he answered, “they tell but

the tale of *The Wolf-brother* to-night. They say that once upon a time there were two brothers and one sister, and that the three lived together, for their parents were dead. The sister, who was much given to the wearing of fine wampum and the braiding of her long hair with beads and to putting on long-fringed leggins and gay moccasins, had no time to care for the little brother. Neither did the elder brother have time, for the blood of manhood was rushing in him and he had shame to play with children. So the little brother grew lonely and ran away weeping. Now the sister heard him weeping as he ran, and she thought it was a dove mourning and hearkened not. He passed close by the elder brother, who heard him weeping also, but believed the sound to be the whimpering of a cub which had run into the bush after he had killed its mother for her fine coat. When the little brother did not come back, they knew he was lost in the forest and believed him dead. But when the snow melted and the soft rains fell, the elder brother

went forth on a long fishing trip. One afternoon near the close of day, he was out on the lake in his canoe. He heard some one singing :

“ ‘ My brother, my brother,
I am turning into a wolf,
I am turning into a wolf.’ ”

Then he saw his little brother standing on the shore. He paddled toward him, and on drawing near was frightened to behold him half-turned into a wolf. He reached the shore and drew his canoe upon the beach and sprang out. He ran toward his brother and strove to catch him in his arms, crying, ‘ My brother, my brother, come to me ! ’ But the little brother eluded his embrace, and fled, still singing :

“ ‘ My brother, my brother,
I am turning into a wolf,
I am turning into a wolf.’ ”

Then he disappeared in the forest.

“ The hunter stood still and listened. Soon he heard the howling of a wolf. Then very sad he went away. At the

melting of the snows every year he went to that spot on the lake shore and called, but the Wolf-brother never came again. Thus goeth the tale which the pines are telling each other to-night, and some of the oldest trees remember hearing the little brother weep as he passed under their shade the day he ran away. Hear how soft they rustle now. They show thus how loud he wept."

Naukoska fell to smoking his pipe again.

Outside the wall the trees swayed wildly. The wind had broken the leaden sky, and now and then, through swiftly moving clouds, shone out a star burning brightly in the deep blue heavens.

The story, the night, affected Peggy strangely. Why had not her brother come? Was this precious, newly-found possession to be taken from her? The deeply maternal instinct in the little maid had been stirred to its depths. All that was protecting and lovable in her had gone out to him. Old Naukoska's face, the stone wall, faded away. She seemed to

see her brother alone in the forest, no longer wearing the scarlet coat of yesterday, but a shaggy skin. Gaunt, longer of limb, in her fancy he turned and glared at her, and as she met his gaze she thrilled with terror. His smile was no longer pleasant, his eyes were those of a wolf! She sprang to her feet and shook the nodding Naukoska awake.

“Naukoska, Naukoska!” she cried, “open the gate!” For suddenly she felt she must go to her brother, to wrap her arms around him, to press her face to his changed one, to hold him within her embrace until that which was so strange, so ferocious, should pass away.

“Naukoska,” she cried, impatient at the old man’s delay, “it is I, thy little daughter of the Singing Trees. Naukoska, open the gate for me.”

Slowly he rose, unlocked and pushed open the heavy gate. “Thou wouldst go out and see how all goes in the forest to-night,” he said indulgently, “To-morrow we shall have snow.”

It was a secret between these good

friends that every night he undid the gate and she stepped outside for a little while, breathing all the peace and balmy scents of the forest, enchanted that no walls surrounded her. Now, as she stood without in the majestic woods and felt the cool rush of air, unbroken by the wall, sweep over her, the hot impulse died down and she wondered at the lengths to which her imagination had carried her. Still, she was sure that something unforeseen and terrible must have occurred to prevent her brother's coming, not realising, in her ignorance of the world and its demands, that many things, not in themselves serious, might intervene between the making and keeping of an appointment.

"Naukoska," she asked the old gate-keeper as she had many times before, "where is my father's home?"

And old Naukoska would answer: "There is a strip of forest and beyond lies the Indian village and still beyond that, is thy father's home."

This time he did not reply. Turning,

she saw him nodding with sleep, for he was very old. She glanced at the upper right-hand wing of the castle where showed a patch of orange. Through the window came faintly the sweet sound of Ann's spinet. Madame Van Vrankin's room she could not see, but she knew she was there, spending her evening in solitude as was her custom.

Old Naukoska, waking, found his companion gone. Doubting not that she had returned to the castle, he laboriously closed the heavy gate, then, reseating himself, puffed at the dying coal in his pipe.

Meanwhile, Peggy followed fearlessly the forest path old Naukoska had so often pointed out to her. She heard the hooting of Ohowa, the owl.

"Whoo, whoo," she mocked, "are your big eyes watching where I go, Ohowa?"

Far above her the big trees clashed their branches as Ower, the wind, passed over them.

"I have heard the tale you whispered to the trees to-night, Ower," she said.

Presently she crossed the little stream and soon came to the Indian village. She made a half-circuit around it to avoid being seen and perhaps delayed. She noted that only the squaws and children were to be seen encircling the fires in front of the wigwams, and so judged that the warriors were on a long hunt. Naked children played with their dogs. A handsome young squaw, her face gay with paint, her wild black hair falling on her shoulders, appeared to be relating a story to a group of women.

As Peggy passed by a corn field, she was startled by a shrivelled old crone, who stepped across her path from out the rustling stalks. The little maid shuddered, for she judged her to be the old woman of whom Naukoska had told her, and who, before death entered a wigwam, was always to be seen sitting at the doorway just at twilight.

Beyond the village, facing the county highway, Johnson Hall, built of gray stone, loomed up in solitary grandeur. The entrance doors were flung wide, and

a strong yellow light, dimmed by smoke, streamed forth from the interior.

Peggy quickened her steps eagerly.

Within, her father, Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs in the Mohawk Valley, was entertaining the warriors of the Five Nations of the Iroquois. Over five hundred were now assembled in the hall, each warrior with his pelts beside him awaiting his turn to trade them. These assemblies generally lasted several days, and during this time much pleasure as well as business was in order. Preparations for the entertainment had been going on for weeks. The negro servants, although knowing that the Indians despised them as slaves, were more joyous than any over the festivities, and had the larder well stocked with their choicest delicacies.

Sir William Johnson, in honour to his guests, wore the dress of a Mohawk chief, even to the detail of exchanging his powdered wig for one made of straggling black hair. Long association with these People of the Long House, as the tribes living in

the valley were called, had developed in him certain like characteristics. He was dignified and inclined to be taciturn, sober to an extent bordering on melancholy. These peculiarities he showed chiefly in dealing with the Indians. There were other occasions when his love of humour and good living broke through his reserve and he seemed what he had been born, a hearty, handsome Irishman of the merchant class, who had by his own efforts raised himself to a position of undisputed honour and responsibility. George III. had granted him the largest tracts of land ever accorded to a private person. There in the forest wilds, he, at once prosperous trader and undisputed sovereign, entertained with splendid hospitality the strangers and officers whose duties led them to that part of the country.

His honourable dealings with the Indians, and his protection of their interests against the white traders who were ever quick to take advantage of the savages; his wisdom in never grasping at a petty advantage, although never failing to pro-

mote his own advancement ; his reserve on ordinary occasions and his fiery eloquence when the time was ripe for speech ; his great bravery and self-control matching their own, combined to give him undisputed sway over them.

To-night he sat in a chair on a platform that ran across the back of the long hall. He smoked a long Indian pipe as he bargained with the warriors. To his right were flung the purchased skins, and on his left were piles of gay calicoes, beads, bright-hued blankets, buttons, and various attractive trinkets.

On this same platform three British officers and a Dutch hunter, from the little town of Albany, with their pipes and wine, sat around a small table playing cards. The white wigs of the officers, their scarlet uniforms trimmed with gold lace, added a brilliant touch of colour to the hall. The hunter's dress, with its leathern breeches, its worn velvet coat of brown, seemed sober enough by contrast. His chestnut hair, waving back in careless ringlets from his forehead, was tied at the

nape of the neck by a simple black ribbon. His bronzed, youthful countenance, animated by laughter, afforded a pleasing comparison with the rubicund faces of his companions. Heated by wine, they were beginning to show some ill-nature at his continued good fortune in the game.

Seated aloof from these, Sir John Johnson, his chair tilted back against the wall, amused himself by carving a peach-stone.

Over five hundred Indians sat on the floor. As they smoked, they talked together or gambled with cherry-stones. Here and there among them were small piles of pelts.

Iron lanterns cast their light over the scene. The walls of the lofty hall were panelled with wood, and the high rafters, blackened by smoke, showed but dimly.

An oath rang out, followed by the tipping over of the table and a scattering of the cards. Two of the players had sprung to their feet. They were the hunter and the eldest officer. The latter, a short, corpulent man, his full face purple with

wrath, let forth a volley of oaths which the Dutchman, fiery-eyed, and pale with anger, answered by a contemptuous shrug.

The officer, brandishing a card, was about to speak again, when the covert laughter of his two comrades at his drunken folly made him start to turn in wrath on them.

His glance fell on a sight so surprising that, half-turned around, he stood still, staring open-mouthed. The others followed the direction of his glance.

At the far end of the hall, on the threshold of the entrance, stood a little maid. Her yellow hair fell in a long and shining braid; her flowered chintz gown parted in front over a bright green silk petticoat. Her smiling, rosy face hovered like a flower above the dusky faces of the lounging Indians. She threaded her way through them, her tender and satisfied gaze fixed on Sir John.

“Kaweewee (little girl papoose),” grunted the Indians.

Her brother started on seeing her, but quickly regained his nonchalant attitude,

his surprise revealed only in the brightening of his listless eyes.

Sir William did not see his daughter until she reached the platform. He stared at her, while through his mind rushed various conjectures as to the cause that brought her. His unreasoning alarm failed to argue that such a serene countenance boded little need for anxiety. Was his daughters' preceptress ill, dying? Had anything happened to Ann, his favourite? But then why had not one of the slaves been sent?

"How did you come here?" he asked, sternly. "Who brought you? Where is Ann?"

"I came alone," answered she. "I came away while old Naukoska slept, and neither Madame nor Ann knows that I am here." She stepped upon the platform.

He seized her arm roughly. His well-trained features betrayed none of the angry amazement that filled his breast.

This fair little girl, the image of her low-born, unhappy young mother, had never won his love. Even as a very

young child her gaze had disconcerted and repelled him. He, who ruled the untamable Indians, here felt himself defeated and set at naught. Peggy neither feared her father nor evinced the slightest concern in his presence. Now silently obstinate, she struggled to free herself from his grasp.

With a sudden revulsion of feeling, a disheartening conviction of the lack of affection between him and his youngest daughter, he let her go.

She passed the card-players whose quarrel had been forgotten in interest at her appearance, and went over to Sir John.

"I waited for you and you did not come," she said, and so stood smiling at him in great content.

A perverse and teasing strain, that often betrayed him into a cruelty he did not originally intend, now showed itself in Sir John. He affected not to know her.

"What sent you here?" repeated Sir William, with freshly rising anger.

She ignored his question, still smiling

at her brother, whose treatment she did not yet comprehend.

"I grew fearful for your safety," spoke she, sweetly, "and so I came."

Every line of her square little figure expressed an invincible obstinacy to her father. He could not disassociate her from her mother. For the moment he felt as if his young Dutch wife, whose life had flickered out at the birth of this last child, had returned to defy him and reassert herself threefold for the suppression of the past. He put his hand to his eyes. He felt unsteady. His self-control was deserting him. He became conscious of the laughter of the officers, and doubted not that grim amusement lurked behind the masks of dusky gravity the warriors wore.

He rose, and, stepping forward, seized his daughter by the shoulder and turned her squarely around.

"Mary," he said, never softening her name by the fond diminutive *Madame* had accorded it, "if you can give me no good reason for your presence here, go at

once and return the way you came. Do not mistake me," he added, menacingly, "I shall see that you are properly punished for this folly."

She struggled to get back to her brother.

"John," asked his father, now thoroughly baffled, "what does this mean?"

The other shrugged his shoulders. "I," he answered, still perversely bent on tormenting the little maid, "how can I tell? Doubtless she heard of my return from abroad and ran to see if 'twere true that I was so marvellous fascinating. Well, well, so this is one of my sisters. She does not favour you."

He laughed up into his father's face.

Sir William softened. This son was as the apple of his eye. He laid his hand on his shoulder. "Well, John, you have yet to see Ann, but for that matter it will not be when you please or when I please."

"I am sorry I did not know all about you," spoke Peggy, in a high, clear tone, "you are not like Ann."

Sir John laughed again, flushing slightly. He was beginning to be ashamed of himself. Still he would be perverse to the end. His amused glance seemed to ask his father: "What little firebrand have we here?"

Peggy turned away, and her gaze swept the dusky faces before her. She was not frightened, but she had a strange fluttering in her breast, and was too simple a child to know that the emotion she felt was a realisation of her utter friendlessness in that great hall.

She heard the laughter of the officers and she stared at them in innocent wonder.

"Here, my little girl," said the young Dutchman, kindly, holding out to her a handful of cracked butternuts that he happened to have in his coat pocket.

She took them and slipped them into the silken reticule of her petticoat. She would store them away for her squirrels to eat in the winter. Then her composure gave way. Her small mouth quivered. The tears rolled down her face.

"Take me back to Ann," she said.

"I think — I think — I think she misses me, and I have been so long away."

"There, there," he said, hastily, "there, don't cry. You'll soon be home." He picked his hat and gun up from the floor. He was sufficiently acquainted with the domestic affairs of his host to know where she lived.

"I will take her back," he said.

Sir William gave a grim nod of assent. He liked the hunter cordially, and of late had taken him into his confidence in regard to his policy with the Indians. As he was about to cross back to his seat a merry thought struck him and he paused and clapped the young man heartily on the shoulder.

"Ha, ha, my dear Claus," he shouted, "I wonder what she'll say to your invasion? I've a mind to send John, only —" He stopped, scowling.

"Come," said the young Dutchman, taking Peggy's hand.

Thus defeated and hurt, she left the hall.

The officers collected the scattered

cards, and between wine and deals gossiped of Sir William.

“And 'pon my word,” said he who professed most knowledge, “they have it about the town that he has kept his two daughters shut up all their lives like princesses in a tower. Some have it that they are blind; others, that the oldest is deformed. But there is something wrong somewhere. As for Madame Van Vrankin, we know” — He tapped his forehead significantly. “Poor Van Vrankin, he was a good fellow. Here's a toast to his memory!”

All the remainder of the evening Sir William felt a sting of annoyance that one of his daughters should have beheld him in his Mohawk costume. Although he dressed thus commonly among the Indians, yet he never called at the castle save when attired as an English gentleman of rank. He had exhibited a curious vanity in this respect.

Some time later Sir John rose and silently left the hall. Once without, he stood several moments looking in the

direction his sister and her escort had probably taken. He drew out his watch. It was still early. So he went around to the stable, and, having ordered his horse saddled, he mounted and set out for the little town of Albany, there to spend an evening in good company at the tavern.

Chapter III

THE wind had died down; the still air was brilliant with the light of the young moon and stars. The trunks of the trees and the ground were white with frost.

As Mr. Claus suited his swinging stride to his companion's little steps, he sought to engage her in conversation. But silent, almost taciturn in her unhappiness, she would not reply. They met no one as they passed through the Indian village. The women and children had retired into the wigwams for the night. Now and then some portion of the scene was vividly lighted by a leaping tongue of flame from a dying fire. Several dogs followed the two some distance, barking at their heels. After crossing the stream, over two miles of forest road still intervened between them and the castle. Suddenly, with a

whispered hush, he dropped to the ground and drew her down beside him.

The hazelnut-bushes just ahead rustled with the presence of some creature. The quivering leaves had not yet lost all colour and showed silver-green beneath a mystic veil of frost and moonlight. In the moment's intensity the sharp noise of snapping twigs sounded loud. From out the thicket a deer stepped slowly and majestically forth. It stood still in the centre of the forest road, its beautiful antlered head raised, snuffing the air.

Peggy heard a sigh of joy so deep as to be almost a groan at her side, and then the report of a musket. The shock dazed her. When the smoke cleared away she saw Mr. Claus bending over the fallen deer.

"See, Mistress Johnson," he cried, exulting, "how is this for luck? I will carry it with us to the castle that they may not say you came home empty-handed."

But she had no word of congratulation for him, so deeply pity for the deer filled

her breast. She stroked the graceful head, and bent and laid her own cheek against it, then stood up sobbing.

Her companion was touched with sympathy. He knelt on the road in front of her, and wiped away her fast rolling tears with the hem of her petticoat, not having his own kerchief convenient.

“Poor little one,” he said, “poor little one,” for he judged her tears flowed because of a wounded affection as well as on account of the deer. He felt revive the anger he had experienced earlier in the evening toward her brother. “For I doubt not,” he said to himself, “that some prank of his is at the root of this matter.”

Peggy had been too absorbed in her unhappiness to take much note of her escort until now. But as he knelt in front of her, and she met his pleasant smile, his bright, kind eyes, and remembered the handful of nuts he had given her, a deep gratitude took possession of her.

“I wept for the poor deer,” she said, gently, “but I am not angry with you.

Was not Naukoska a great hunter, too? Has he not told me that a man who could not kill had a woman's heart? But I desire not again to see anything killed."

He slung the deer across his shoulders and they went on. She sobbed a little at intervals, as she trudged along at his side. Soon he noticed that she was stumbling from weariness. They were nearly home now and he was ashamed at not having perceived her exhaustion before. He laid down his burden and, picking her up lightly in his strong arms, carried her the rest of the way. Then he went back for the deer.

"Naukoska, open the gate," she cried, pounding on it with both hands, "Naukoska, it is I, thy little daughter of the Singing Trees, come back to thee from out the world."

It was some time before he heard, and then he opened the gate with guttural exclamations of astonishment. But when he beheld the stalwart figure of the young man returning with the deer, the joy of

the hunter took possession of the old man and fired his thin blood with memories of his own youth.

"Come," cried Peggy, dragging at Mr. Claus's arm, "give the deer to Naukoska. Come, I will take you to Ann. She is in the room above, where the light burns."

The stories he had heard of the place had stirred his imagination and he tread expectantly, as in an enchanted castle.

Was it curiosity in regard to Sir William's domestic affairs that had set his blood tingling? He knew well, however, that up to this moment he had been actuated only by sympathy for his little companion.

The massive front door was unlocked and yielded to Peggy's touch.

He stepped into a hall that appeared to run through the centre of the house from front to back. Wax tapers held by figures on the newel-posts of the wide stairway, lighted the place dimly. His guide moved up the stairs at his side. When they reached the landing she turned

and went some distance down the corridor toward the front of the house, and opened a door.

“Ann,” she called.

His astonished gaze observed first an open book lying beside a candle on the polished top of a harpsichord. His eyes followed the light of the candle, which seemed to concentrate upon and pursue a solitary girlish figure with flying braids of hair, that appeared to be following the motions of a dance. Now gravely stepping forward, then back, anon courtesying to the floor, she moved with a grace which breathed the absent melody.

“Ann,” repeated Peggy, “I have brought you one from the world.”

The dancer paused. “One from the world,” she repeated, wonderingly. Then she saw the stalwart stranger on the threshold and stared at him in amazement.

“Sir William sent me home with your sister,” he said, embarrassed and hastening to explain his presence there.

“Alas!” cried Peggy, “I have had most sorrowful experience of the world.”

"Oh, where have you been?" cried Ann. "Oh, why did you not ask me to go with you?" She appealed to the stranger. "Where has she been?"

"She came to the Hall," he answered, "and I am sorry to say that your father was so angered he would not let her stay."

"I know," sighed Ann, "Madame grieves that he loves Peggy so little. But why did she not ask me to go?"

His hands, clasping his soft hat, rested on the top of his gun, which he had planted on the floor. From his splendid height he looked down upon her, listening to her words.

She glanced helplessly around for her sister. But Peggy had disappeared. With an effort she raised her shy eyes to his, feeling that, in the absence of Madame, the hospitality of the castle devolved on her.

"I dance," said she, "that I may not be lacking in genteel accomplishments when I go forth into the world."

He smiled, shy as herself. But she,

encouraged by that smile, ventured to continue. "At this hour, Madame, my preceptress, retires to her room until it is time for prayers. Thus I find an opportunity to teach myself the art of dancing." She indicated by a gesture the open book. "I do not think the instruction I have is very good. Perchance," the eagerness of her desire shining in her eyes, "you will tell me if I step correctly."

"I do not dance," he replied.

"I thought all in the world danced," she cried.

"We all dance to different tunes," he laughed, recovering from his embarrassment, "and fate is the piper."

Ann smiled vaguely, not quite understanding him. "Have you been lately to London?" she asked.

"I have never been there," he said, and saw that she was much disappointed by his answer. He heard a step behind him and turned. Madame Van Vrankin was coming slowly toward them down the hall.

"Here is some one to see us at last, dear

Madame," cried Ann, happily, forgetting her momentary disappointment in their guest's accomplishments.

Madame returned the young man's bow in silent, cold surprise.

He hastened to explain his presence.

She listened attentively. Nothing of what she might have felt on hearing of Peggy's unprecedented proceeding, neither curiosity nor astonishment, showed in her expression. But when he mentioned Sir William's keen annoyance, a shadowy smile quivered on her lips. Encouraged by the fact that one so pale and cold could smile even thus faintly, he spoke with youthful ardour of her husband.

"Madame Van Vrankin," he said, "I am honoured to meet you, for I have always heard much of the brave man whose name you bear. They say in Albany to this day that there never was a soldier at once more modest and brave. He was ever the last to admit his own valour. Why, when we young men in Albany were little fellows, the very name of Peter Stuyvesant Van Vrankin was enough to

set us all on fire with enthusiasm. Children have great ambitions, Madame."

"Yes, that is what you ever say, Madame," put in Ann, "and you call me foolish whene'er I tell you my plans."

"I thank you, sir," said Madame, ignoring Ann's remark, "it is long since I have even heard my husband's name spoken. Are you then from Albany? I wonder if I knew your family."

"My name is Claus," he answered.

She nodded. "You must have been a very young child when I knew your mother. She had quite a family."

"She and my father are both dead these many years," he answered, "and we children are scattered. I am the only one left in Albany."

"I have never been in Albany," said Ann, wistfully.

"It is not far," he said. He felt that he should be going, and bent a look on her that startled her. For at the thought of leaving, a new-born grief woke in his breast. He felt that he was living a dream, and that he should never see her again.

"The lights have been extinguished in the hall below," spoke Madame Van Vrankin, and even in this moment of abstraction he was conscious of the peculiar charm of her voice. It was not cold and monotonous, as might have been expected from her personality, but musical, and possessing a plaintively sweet intonation. "Ann, give me a candle, that I may show Mr. Claus down."

"Do not let me trouble you," he said, more wounded than offended at his dismissal. "I can let myself out, and if there is some one at the door to lock it after me, it may not be necessary for you to go down."

"This way, if you please," she said, taking the candle from Ann, and preceding him.

At the head of the stairway, Mr. Claus paused to look once more at Ann. Her face was partly in shadow, but the light from the room back of her fell on her beautiful dark head, the white hand hanging at her side, the rich gleam of her green silk petticoat, and for the first time he noted that the two girls were dressed

exactly alike. He could not see her expression, but the wistful droop of her head as she leant against the casement of the door made him realise how lonely her life must be, that she should regret the going of an entire stranger.

Madame Van Vrankin did not lead the way to the front door. Instead, she ushered him into a large room on the left. Placing the candle on a table of such substantial size that he judged the apartment must be a dining-room, she motioned him to a chair.

“I brought you here, sir,” she explained, “that I might offer you that hospitality which, I trust, none will ever enter a roof under which I abide without receiving.”

Outside the circle of light, flung by the candle, he could see nothing. Madame’s black-robed figure was not distinguishable in the darkness as she moved about at the farther end of the room. He heard the clink of glass.

“You will have some fruit-cake, sir?” she asked.

Now that he could not see her face, the charming voice, so fresh and melodious, seemed naturally to belong to a young woman. Strangely affected, he answered, simply, "You are very kind, Madame."

She set a decanter of wine and glasses on the table, a napkin, a plate containing cake, and a silver dish of red apples, highly polished. She sat down at the side of the table opposite him and took the glass of wine he poured out and passed to her.

"It has been my experience, sir," she said, "that in matters where the future holds a probability that you may put yourself in opposition to any one, it is best to have the relations and stand you will maintain perfectly frank with that person from the beginning. May I ask if you are unmarried?"

An hour ago he would have replied without embarrassment. Now his cheek reddened. He nodded.

"I scarcely know how to frame my words most fitly," she continued, slowly, "and not to offend you. Yet I trust you will meet me generously and believe that

my interest is solely for another person and not myself. It is difficult to speak at all upon a subject as delicate as the one I have in mind, and I am perplexed as to the wisdom of saying anything. Still, I will proceed. Peggy, whom you brought home to-night, is still a child in thought. Not so her sister, or you would be welcome here at the castle. It is owing to this that I take upon myself the painful and inhospitable duty of requesting you that, as this is your first visit here, it may also be your last."

The blood rushed to his face. He felt outraged, humiliated, and, for the moment, could only believe that his hostess did not consider his escort of her youngest ward other than a pretext, on his part, that he might force his presence on them. He would have risen and left at once, had not the action seemed childish. The bit of cake he had eaten choked him. And then he looked up and saw that a delicate pink flush had risen to Madame's pale face, and that her eyes were very gentle and sympathetic.

“I beg that you will hear me to the end,” she said. “I have striven since their mother’s death to raise Sir William’s daughters in solitude, and, until to-night, I have been successful. It had been my hope, in thus shutting out all worldly things, to turn their thoughts, their every desire, to God; and when the time grew ripe for them to go forth into the world, I had prayed it might be as servants of the Lord, doing the work of the Church among the Indians. In so rearing them I desired to offer a pure and living sacrifice to a world my life had done nothing toward making better. And I have failed. I have failed absolutely. Ann, for whom I have most prayed, whom, if possible, I have most carefully guarded, lives in a world of her own, to the entrance of which I hold not the key. The loneliness, the well-nigh impenetrable forest with which I have surrounded her, fails to confine her. Her imagination, unfortunate as it is beautiful, knows no solitude, and, as a ray of sunlight slips through the forest, so does she evade all the barriers

I have builded. As for Peggy, the child you brought home to-night—" She paused, her expression grew austere. "Sir," she continued, "she has made a mockery of my teachings, and is a pagan, pure and simple, without hope of change. In the murmuring of the pines she hears not the word of God, as I have taught her, but an Indian legend she has learned. As fluently as her own, she speaks the tongue of this heathen people. To live close to the earth, to have her freedom and her curious pets, is all she desires. She is like any other simple forest creature, with more intelligence, that is all. Now that God's will in them has shown otherwise than I, in my pitiful attempt, would have moulded them, I have prayed that happiness may come to Ann. Her nature is tender and generous, ever alive to the suffering of others, quick to repent and acknowledge her fault if she does wrong. But as for Peggy, I trust that her soul will be awakened, even though it must be through the bitter medium of pain and anguish."

Respecting her emotion no less than he rebelled against her precepts, her listener made no comment when she paused.

“And now to come to the matter in hand,” she continued, with a faint smile, “one which I have not reached save by going around Robin Hood’s barn, as they say. You, sir, are a bachelor, and Ann is beautiful. Ah, sir, I know this world well. It may be that you will leave here to-night and the thought of her never enter your mind any more seriously than it has now. And, such is the irony of fate, this warning of mine may be first to rouse in you the desire I dread. Against the possibility of any relation whatsoever, I must protest. My authority here is lessening. It would be a simple matter, as things are now, for you to obtain Sir William’s consent to visit his daughter. He has already expressed his disapproval of their continued confinement. Therefore, I appeal to your generosity, sir.”

He rose. “Madame,” he replied, not without a certain youthful dignity, “I

am not offended by what you have said, and I will not come again, yet I cannot help but agree with Sir William, that such continued solitude does his daughters more harm than good."

"What would you suggest?" she asked, smiling and amused.

"They should meet other young people, and they should marry," he said, stoutly.

"Yes," she rejoined, with a touch of malice, "but marry whom? They have not been brought up to make good Dutch wives for Albany settlers." She shrugged her shoulders slightly. "Ah, sir, to what ridiculous lengths is our conversation leading us! I am a foolish old woman, and will have it that none can set eyes on Ann without loving her." Her eyes sparkled, the austerity and gravity of her former manner seemed to have dropped like a mask from her. The abundant hair, beneath the widow's cap she wore, took on a lustrous gleam to his astonished gaze. He felt that once in a gay world she had been a beauty and a power. She

extended her hand and he bowed low over it.

"I hope I may have the honour of meeting you again," he said, gravely. His high spirits of a moment since had died, and he was filled with sadness. This woman, at once so admirable and brilliant, barred his way to seeing again her to whose loveliness his soul had gone forth.

She went to the door with him and opened it, holding the candle high that its light might fall as far as possible. The clouds had met again and a light snow was falling. The ground was white.

He found that old Naukoska had gone in for the night.

"We need not rouse him," said Madame Van Vrankin, "I have another key here. He is very old, nearly a century, he says." She set the candle down in the shelter of the hall, and, unmindful of the weather, followed her guest to the gate. Once on the road without, he waited until he heard the key turned again in the lock.

"Good night," he called, cheerily, "I

shall not come again save to leave a string of game at your gate."

"Good night," came Madame's voice from the other side of the wall, "and may the blessing of God go with you."

Outside, in the falling snow, the young Dutchman remained standing some moments looking up at the patch of orange light in the right wing of the building. And gradually in the silence he became conscious of the faint, sweet tinkle of Ann's spinet.

Chapter IV

MADAME went back into the house and locked the door. Half-way up the stairs a draught sweeping through the hall blew out the candle. She continued, however, to hold the taper rigidly and at a distance, as if it were indeed still lighted and there were danger of the wax dripping on her. As she reëntered the parlour, Ann, who was playing her spinet, rose and turned on her stormily.

“Why did you never tell me of my brother?”

Madame sat down wearily. Her far-off gaze seemed to pass beyond the girl.

“I am tired of always living here,” cried Ann. “Who was that man? And Peggy! Oh, you should know how sullen she acts! I went to our room and made her come back here where it is warm to tell me where she had been. But all the time you

were gone she would not say one word to me save that she had gone to see her brother. Is our brother like that hunter?"

Peggy sat in a chair, her hands folded in her lap. Where Ann would have scolded and wept passionately, she was immovable. But there was unhappiness as well as obstinacy in the little maid's face which Madame did not fail to notice.

"Until now, Ann," she said, "you were content without knowledge of a brother." She pointed to Peggy. "You see the fruits of disobedience. Has it brought her happiness?"

"Then I have a brother," cried Ann, all gladness.

"That hunter was not our brother," put in Peggy, crossly, catching at the word.

"My little Ann," said Madame, "you have been a good child to me. Be still obedient, and rest satisfied for to-night. I will tell you more to-morrow. It is long past the hour for prayer, but nevertheless the servants will be waiting. Come, Peggy."

The chapel had been added to the castle by Madame Van Vrankin herself. A corridor, that always seemed cold and full of draughts even in summer, led to it from the main hall. Muffled sounds of laughter and conversation came to their hearing.

"They are still in the kitchen," said Madame, and smiled, for the sounds of good cheer pleased her, she who was always so friendly to the humble. She went on down and opened the door leading into the kitchen. The negroes and several Christian Indians sat around the open hearth on which blazed a pile of large logs. On the table the deer lay in state. Old Naukoska sat in the chimney-corner.

"Come, my children," she said, mildly, "it is time for prayers."

The little chapel had several oak benches and a stone floor. The simple altar was always covered by linen, exquisitely embroidered, and held a communion-service of silver that had never been used, for no clergyman had ever been invited to visit the castle.

Madame made the service short this

night. The chill air blew around them as they knelt on the stone. The negroes chattered with the cold. Madame shivered so that her trembling hands refused to hold the book, and she was obliged to lay it on the bench in front of which she knelt.

All night the snow fell. Ann and Peggy slept wrapped close in each other's arms for warmth. Terunda fluttered in under the silk coverlid. When they woke in the morning, it was to behold a white world. The crimson and gold hosts of the woods had been vanquished.

"The little people of the leaves are gone," said old Naukoska.

Flocks of birds which had lingered during the warm spell flew southward. They heard the calling of the belated wild geese. The snow continued to fall for a week. Then the sun shone out in a clear blue sky. The valley stretched away in great drifts of snow, the dazzling whiteness broken by the sharp black lacework of the leafless trees and the dark green of the unchanging pines. From the day the snow ceased

to fall, the cold, which had been moderate up to that time, increased steadily. The waters of the Mohawk were frozen to a greater depth than had been known for many years. So hard a crust formed over the snow that snow-shoes were not used. And always was heard the snapping and crackling sound made by the intense cold.

It was three weeks before Sir William visited his daughters. He came in a sledge drawn by four horses over the frozen river. Ann, who watched for him every afternoon, saw him coming when still far off, and ran to tell her companions. There had been no need for any of the household to go outside this weather, and so the snow lay heaped in undisturbed drifts about the castle. Madame Van Vrankin sent the servants to clear a path and to shovel the snow aside that the gate might be opened.

The negroes, though the greatest sufferers in the cold weather, were yet glad of a frolic, and, bundling themselves to the ears, set to work with a will. The Christian Indians, who in their transitory visits

were always treated as guests, watched the slaves haughtily, and did not attempt to assist them. Only around the kitchen fire, when tales were told, did they unbend to talk. The two young girls watched the sport from the drawing-room windows. The slaves were picturesque figures, the women attired in bright calicoes and cast-off garments of their mistresses, and the men in old uniforms and gay coats they had begged from visitors to Johnson Hall. Their ebony faces, lighted by splendid white teeth, shone with joy. All cast devoted glances toward the upper window, and tripped one another head over heels in the snow for the benefit of the two wistful spectators who wished they might join in the fun without loss of dignity.

Ann ran down-stairs to meet her father at the door when he arrived.

“Well, Nancy, are you glad to see me?” he asked, pinching her cheek.

He shook the snow from him. His fresh and hearty presence brought a whiff of winter into the hall.

"How cold you are!" she cried, helping him off with his coat.

"Splendid weather. See here, Nancy," lowering his voice mysteriously, "who sent your sister to the hall the other night?" He gave a significant upward jerk of his thumb. "Did she have anything to do with it?" He had forgotten his anger toward Peggy, his threat to punish her, but he was still curious.

"Neither of us knew she had gone until she came home with the hunter," answered Ann.

"Well, I didn't know, I didn't know," he said, "I thought she sent the child to torment me. I tell you, Nancy, your sister is going to grow up into an uncanny woman."

"Father," said she, not heeding his remark, and putting both hands on his shoulders to gaze up into his face, her expression roguish and full of delight, "you never told us that we had a brother who is most comely and a great wit."

He laughed jovially. "Ay, Nance, he's a shapely fellow and has a pretty

wit, a little too much given to flirting and drinking as yet, but he'll sober down into a brave soldier in time."

She was slightly abashed by his exceeding mirth. He chuckled all the way up-stairs.

"Ha, ha, my dear Madame," he cried, bursting into the room, Ann clinging lovingly to his arm, "so the cat is out of the bag. A very good jest at your expense, hey?"

Madame Van Vrankin rose and curt-sied. "You do not mind the cold, then? And that, in spite of your advancing years," she added, with a touch of malice. "I scarce looked for you in this weather."

He glowered at her. A hale and hearty, if no longer a young man, he considered himself still in the prime of life, yet he never came into her presence without feeling as if the very breath of death and old age blew cold upon him. Once in his presence she had engaged in a conversation on the immortality of the soul with Ann.

He had interrupted them, his full face turning purple with vexation. "Never

“speak of religion in my presence,” he had shouted, thumping on the table with his fist, “it makes me melancholy.”

“I am not surprised at that,” she had retorted, dryly.

Now, in his annoyance at her allusion to his age, he forgot his jest and settled himself sullenly in a chair before the fire.

“Mix me a glass of grog, Nancy,” he said, stretching out his legs to its generous warmth.

She hung the little kettle on the crane, and then took down from the chimney shelf a pipe and a box that contained tobacco. She filled the pipe and handed it to him with a lighted taper, then seated herself on a stool at his knee. The first few puffs soothed his ruffled temper. The genial warmth after his long, cold ride made him pleasantly drowsy. He looked at Madame Van Vrankin sitting opposite him, the firelight flashing on her knitting-needles. Her expression was one of abstraction, as if she had already forgotten his presence. He could discern in her now no trace of the dashing English beauty

that had set the hearts of the Albany beaux on fire one long-ago winter. He had been among the jilted. He never recalled this episode without a sense of humour and a delicious consciousness of escape. She had married one of the famous Van Vrankins. Later the border war broke out, and her husband was called to the front. She seized the opportunity his absence thus afforded to revisit London, leaving her little son with his father's parents. Hearing that Sir William Johnson desired a housekeeper, she sold him a High Dutch girl who had been bound to her service for a number of years by the captain in whose ship she sailed to America, and who thus collected her passage-money. Her visit abroad passed into the second year. Neither her husband's entreaties nor longing to see her child could make her turn from the gaiety and adulation that society lavished upon her money and beauty. She wrote, urging her husband to come to London. To this letter she never received a reply. Before it crossed the seas she had word of his death while

fighting. And the same week came the equally terrible news that the old couple, with their little grandson, had gone to visit friends in the country but had never reached their destination, and were believed to have been massacred by the Indians. Eight years later her restless travels brought her to America. There a fresh shock awaited her. The countryside whispered of a scandal at Johnson Hall. Madame Van Vrankin, going to visit her old servant, found the High Dutch girl dying, a baby a week old beside her, and two other tiny children playing in the room. What argument she brought to bear upon Sir William none ever knew, but he married the mother of his children on her death bed, and in the ring that was used in the ceremony Madame had inscribed the date of the day she died.

From that time on Madame Van Vrankin lived at Johnson Castle, which Sir William built for his daughters eight miles back in the forest. There she devoted herself to the two girls, whose

mother had confided them to her care. The oldest child, a boy, the father kept with him, and sent him later to school in England. It fell in with Madame's strange theory of bringing up the children in solitude that the girls should not know of their brother. He, however, learned through the current gossip of their existence, and, although he often wandered near the castle, he did not dare disobey his father's order that Madame Van Vrankin's wishes should be respected.

The secret of the hold she held over Sir William did not lie in her knowledge of his treatment of his wife,—whom, indeed, he remembered as a poor and rather spiritless creature,—but in her promise to leave his daughters her large property. He had been at first more anxious to be rid of the responsibility of bringing up his girls than concerned for their heritage. But greed came with his vast possessions, and he was desirous to leave all to his son whom he idolised. This he could do by counting on her fortune for his two younger children.

Sometimes, however, as he noted Ann blossoming into womanhood, he was tempted to exert his parental authority, and take her to live with him. But his desire that John should inherit all his money and land, undivided, restrained him from defying Madame, who was capable of keeping her word, no matter how deep her affection for her charges.

These thoughts, passing through his mind now as he sat before the fire, saddened him. He took his pipe from his mouth and sighed, and stroked Ann's head as she sat on a stool at his feet waiting for the little kettle to boil. Was she not flesh, of his flesh and yet he had resigned all claim to her?

"It's beginning to boil now," she said, "can't you hear it singing?" holding up her finger to compel attention to the sound.

It was only four o'clock, but outside the circle of firelight the long room was gloomy. The steam spurted in a sudden cloud from the kettle.

"Shall I make tea for us?" asked Ann of Madame.

"I'll have tea myself," said Sir William. "Make it a trifle strong, Nancy, and stir in considerable sugar and a drop of brandy instead of cream for me."

"Where's Peggy?" he continued, watching her as she drew out the low tea-table. "You've got my mother's figure, Nancy. Lord, what a beauty she was! There weren't many who could hold a candle to your grandmother, let me tell you."

"Could she dance?" she asked.

"Dance!" he echoed. "She tripped light as a summer breeze over—"

"Ann," interrupted Madame, "you are putting in far too much tea. Peggy," raising her voice, "are you there? Your father has asked for you."

The little maid came out reluctantly from behind the heavy maroon-coloured curtains at the front window. She had been watching some robins eat the crumbs she had sprinkled on the outside ledge.

Sir William turned and looked at her with a curiosity not unmingled with in-

stinctive fatherly affection. Now that his anger had passed, he was inclined to dismiss her escapade of the other evening indulgently. He put out his hand.

"Come, Peggy," he said, kindly, and drew her to him and kissed her. The touch of her soft little face melted any lingering harshness of feeling on his part. After all, what a mere baby she was, with her yellow hair, her pink cheeks, and blue eyes. As he would have taken her on his knee her figure stiffened rebelliously. The old antagonism flamed up. He pushed her from him.

"There, child," he cried, harshly, "go play with your dolls."

"Please run and tell Pompey to bring up the cream and cake, Peggy dear," asked Ann; "tea is made."

The short afternoon waned. Over the pleasant teacups Sir William's ever fluctuating good-humour revived. He gossiped with Madame on public affairs. The two met on a common ground of intellectual interests. Ann was always a puzzled listener to these conversations.

Her monitress appeared in a new light. Depriving herself voluntarily of even such news as the current post might have supplied, she was unconscious of the eager interest she evinced in Sir William's conversation.

The two girls sat in straight-backed chairs side by side, their hands clasped under the table. Both hoped to hear their brother's name mentioned.

The two older people had one great mutual interest. This was the Indian question. Sir William's position, his title and property, proceeded from his sovereignty over The People of the Long House. He did not underestimate the influence Madame Van Vrankin had gained for him by her efforts to educate and Christianise those Indians that came within her reach. Her power was silent and far-reaching, and she was regarded with peculiar reverence by the tribe. She had built a small stone church in their settlement, and once a month, at her direction, an Albany clergyman preached to the Christian Indians.

"Father," ventured Ann, during a pause in the conversation, "how very tall that hunter was who brought Peggy home."

"Who? Claus?" he asked. "Yes, he's a big fellow. I had hoped John would have been a larger man than he is."

Peggy and Ann both thrilled, and their clasped hands tightened. "That is his name," whispered the little sister.

"I knew the Claus family once," remarked Madame, taking another cup of tea, "this son reminds me of some one I once knew, but I cannot place the resemblance."

Sir William rose to go. Ann ran down-stairs and brought up his outside garments to warm them at the fire.

Fear of Madame, dislike of her father, restrained Peggy no longer.

"When is our brother coming to see us?"

"Please let him come soon," begged Ann. "Madame says now that we know of him, she no longer cares if he comes."

"He's in New York now on business

for me, but I'll send him over when he comes back." He was plainly delighted.

"Why did you not wear your Indian chief dress?" asked Peggy.

He caught the glimmer of a smile on Madame's face, and burst into one of his sudden furies with her. "Ay, laugh," he cried, "and teach my daughters to ridicule me. But, I think, the jest is on you. You who were so determined to keep the natural relations of flesh and blood apart! I'll wager it was not you who told my girls of John." He seized Peggy roughly. "Come, who was it told you of him?"

She struck at him with her free hand. He flung her from him.

"There, you see your work, Madame," he cried.

"She shall be punished," she answered, coldly.

He sniffed, and hurried from the room, slamming the door after him. Ann opened it again, and ran down-stairs after him to say good-bye.

At the Hall all cheer and warmth

awaited his return. He was still entertaining the officers, and also an old friend and his wife from abroad. There would be a bountiful dinner, good wine, cards, and gossip. The stars were shining as he started for home, and he became once more serene, as he got into the sledge and sped along the frozen river, the keen air whistling by, and a wonderful white reflection of snow and starlight in the air.

He did not visit them again until toward Christmas. He came alone. Sir John had been home on a flying visit and gone back to New York, where he professed himself enamoured of a Dutch beauty.

"Oh, Peggy," wept Ann that night, after the two were in bed, "my heart is bitter-sore with disappointment. If he were our brother really, he would come to see us."

"Hush," answered Peggy, solemnly. "Three times has Naukoska set a charm. Three times has it been successful. He will come back. Hush, dear Ann." She put her arms around her sister's neck and

kissed her. "He will come back in the spring, and take us far, far away. Thus Naukoska read in the charm."

But despite her faith in Naukoska, the little maid went to the garden every afternoon, and waited the reappearance of Sir John in vain, lingering until she ached with the bitter cold.

The small animals and birds starved or were frozen to death in large numbers that terrible winter. Every time Peggy went out into the garden she found some helpless creature, which she brought back in her loving little arms, and carried to the kitchen. In her own and Ann's bedroom, she kept her especial pets. There they lived in good-fellowship. She had several crows, a Robin Redbreast, two silver squirrels, and a white rabbit with ruby eyes. But Terunda, who was ill-natured, she was obliged to keep out of the room, unless she were there. Hour after hour she amused herself with them, playing in the lofty chamber, which was chill despite the hangings on the wall and the fire on the hearth.

The wild and timid deer driven by hunger came to the gate, and Madame Van Vrankin ordered food given to them. Ann adopted a fawn that was left behind, and she fed it with warm milk, and had a corner in the stable swept and filled with clean straw for it. Often she walked in the garden with it, muffled to her eyes in her cardinal, a long crimson-hooded garment of fine wool.

So with these diversions afforded by their pets, and a game of shuttlecock in the hall, or chess of an evening, the time passed. Madame had them do much studying, and practice their music, as well as their fine sewing and embroidery.

Chapter V

THERE came a day at last when the spring returned. The ice in the river broke with ominous booming sounds and the swollen water overflowed the banks. The swelling buds of the trees waited the warm rains. In the bare forest, so bright with sunshine and melting snows, the Indian women and children wandered and selected the maple-trees to be tapped. Here and there a temporary wigwam was erected, and near by, swung from three cross poles, bubbled the big iron pot in which the sap was being boiled down to a sweet syrup. The thin blue smoke from these fires rose like incense on the cool, soft air.

March and April passed with ever unfolding beauty.

At the Hall Sir William maintained in marked degree the splendour of his living.

He discarded for the season his Indian costume, and wore the curled peruke and velvet small-clothes of a man of fashion. He rode in a coach and six. His doors were thrown wide to the men and women who visited him and who brought all the manner and dress of the gay world to these wilds. The Hall lost its graver aspect as the abode of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and seemed transformed to an English country place. The rooms rang with merry voices and laughter; through the woods flashed the bright coats of the men, the soberer dresses of the women, as they followed the hunt.

Sir William's daughters had no share in all this gaiety. Once from an upper window Ann saw her father's coach and horses pass along a road that skirted the forest. She caught a fleeting glimpse of brilliant gowns, and fancied, despite the distance, that she heard a faint echo of laughter. Her heart throbbed painfully with excitement. A storm of indignation that she was not one of the party swept

over her. She hurried to find Madame Van Vrankin.

“Madame,” she cried, bursting into the room where her preceptress stood before the embroidery-frame, “I wish the key to the great gate. Peggy has been without, and now I am going.”

The other turned and the mere healthy aggressiveness of youth was forced upon her. So she looked at Ann and felt her own life feeble and colourless.

“It is my wish you should not go outside,” she said.

“I will have the key,” cried Ann, “I will not be treated like a child any longer.”

Madame removed the key from the bunch at her side, and extended it silently. There was a strange patience in her face. Since Peggy’s venture in the fall she had taken his key away from old Naukoska, that none might enter or leave the castle without her knowledge.

“It is my wish you should not go,” she repeated; “you are disobedient.”

But Ann, all in the spirit of a naughty

child, half-repentant at the outset of her intended naughtiness, hurried out. At first she thought of getting Peggy to go with her, but shame at such open defiance deterred her. Naukoska nodded in his accustomed seat in the sunshine. Deprived of his power, still like a toothless old watch-dog, he was faithful to his post.

It required all her strength to push open the gate. She stepped out upon the road for the first time unaccompanied, and stood smiling, looking around her, flinging back her head to gaze into the clear sky, then turning to glance back down the valley. As she did so she noticed that the gate had swung to. She pushed it open again and put a heavy stone in place to keep it so.

"It shall never be closed again," she said, nodding her wilful head at the drowsing Naukoska, "it shall remain open thus for people to pass in and out, to and from the world."

He heeded her not. Not even Peggy's voice could compel his attention nowadays.

She took a bridle-path leading where the wooded depths seemed greenest. The

spring woods were still scant in foliage, and thus held a passing and delicate loveliness, a lofty airiness, and far-reaching forest vistas.

To her delight, she found grazing the young fawn that had been her pet in the winter, and which Madame had ordered turned out when the warm days came, that it might have its freedom and rejoin its kind. Regretful that she had no sugar lumps to give it she plucked the young grass and let it feed from her hand. Tiring at last of playing with it, she wandered on, seeking fresh diversion. Thus it was that all unexpectedly at a turn of the path she and Mr. Claus met each other.

The little fawn was not quicker to retreat than Ann. Only she, after the first start, stood still with beating heart. Her gentle companion bounded away into the forest. For a brief moment the young people were silent, she all timid and fluttering, he, reining in his horse, gazed down on her with a look wistful and dazed, as though she appeared to him in a dream.

“Have you,” asked Ann, first to re-

cover her composure, "seen my father's coach, filled with gay gentlefolk, go passing by this afternoon?"

He dismounted. "No, I haven't seen him. I am only just in from a long hunting trip, and have sent my negro boy on ahead with the muskets and luggage." He did not add that his first thought on nearing home was to ride toward the castle in the hope of catching a glimpse of her at some window.

"I must go on, for I am most anxious to meet my father," said she. Remembering the instructions contained in *The Gentlewoman's Companion*, she dropped him a curtsey.

"Won't you let me go with you?" he asked, eagerly.

"Well, please let us walk very fast," she answered.

"Are Madame Van Vrankin and your sister well?" he inquired, curious to know how she came to be wandering unaccompanied in the forest.

"Madame is still pale from the long winter. She does not like the snow. Do

you think we are surely going the right way to meet my father's coach?" she added, anxiously.

An hour passed. Claus walked in a dream of happiness. Long before he met Ann, the fact of her own and her sister's confinement in the lonely forest had appealed to his imagination. Two years ago he had mingled freely in Albany society and been foremost in the hearty sports of the young Dutchmen, and accompanied their stout and comely sisters to husking-bees and country frolics. But his long trips into the interior, with his body-servant for his one companion, had wrought a change in him. From these forest excursions, lasting several months, he emerged each time with added dignity and shrouded in a more impenetrable reserve. In the solitude of the mighty woods, aloof from his old companions, serious and lofty thoughts came to him, and he developed latent ambition. Conversation at the tavern of an evening with his former companions now annoyed him, and so he drifted away from them and

spent his evening instead at Johnson Hall. Here he not only fell much under the influence of its master, but also met many delightful and worldly people. Sir William looked upon him almost as an established member of his household and grew to consult the young hunter's judgment in any affair of policy with the Indians.

His face as he walked beside Ann was touching in its look of almost boyish happiness. His chestnut hair, that lay carelessly about his forehead, an observer must have felt to be a maternal inheritance. His hazel eyes, veiled by lashes so long that in sunny moods they held the attractive sweetness of certain pretty women, added a contradictory charm to his bronzed well-shaped features.

She wore no head-covering, and he saw that the light on her long braid had a purple lustre like the bloom of grapes. And whenever she raised her eyes to his, he realised their beauty afresh, and told himself that they were not like most blue eyes, but had the same violet tone that made her hair so wonderful. How often

on this last trip as he kept the watch by the fire while his negro boy slept, had he lived over again his one meeting with her! It seemed so natural now to be walking at her side, listening to her sweet tones,—for Ann did most of the talking,—that he was filled with wonder at his own serenity.

She, soon become weary, sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree.

“I fear we made a mistake coming this way,” she sighed. Her lips trembled with disappointment. “I wish I had asked Madame to come with me. Perhaps she would have come.” Her elation had given way to homesickness, and she felt conscience-stricken at the memory of her disobedience. “Have you been far away?” she asked him, seeking to forget her depression in conversation.

“A good distance to the north,” he answered. He, too, experienced a pang of conscience at a sudden thought of Madame, and felt that, in all honour, he ought to conduct his companion home at once.

Ann, having forgotten her question

almost as soon as she had asked it, scarce heard his reply, and gazed dreamily beyond him. "When I go to London," said she, softly, "I shall do exactly as I please."

"What will you do?" he asked, his eyes bright with laughter.

"I shall become a play-actress," she answered, serenely, "and then when I am wearied of that, I shall marry."

The blood rushed to Claus's head. His love and hope, the long winter's denial of any glimpse of her, suddenly stung by wild jealousy, surged over him.

"I beg that you will marry me," he cried.

"Marry you!" she echoed. She sprang to her feet. This — this rude hunter to wish to marry her! And what a way to woo a maid! A sob of fear and dislike burst from her.

Cut to the heart that she wept, ashamed of his own lack of self-control, he hastened to reassure her. "No, no, I did not indeed mean it. I would not marry any woman unless she loved me."

She smiled tremulously; the tears still

hung on her lashes. "Then you but jested with me? Do you expect to marry soon, that you are so much given to jesting on the subject?"

"I shall never marry," he answered, sadly.

"It must be strange to be a hunter's wife," mused Ann. "What would she do when you were far away?"

"I cannot say," he answered; "but if you would like to know what the good Dutch wives in Albany do, I will tell you. In the summer-time they attend to the gardens and dry or preserve fruits, and lay up goodly stores for winter. Yet, 'tis the long, cold evenings that are best, when the supper-table is cleared and a dish of apples and doughnuts put on, and the men smoke and drink their cider, while the women sit around the fire knitting stockings —"

"Knitting stockings," echoed Ann; "when do they find time to read, or play chess or shuttlecock? I should not think they would like knitted stockings." She thrust forth her foot. "My stockings

are of silk, and it is the negro women who preserve and cook at the castle. I feel sorry for the Dutch wives. They must be most unhappy. Why do they marry if they must work so?"

"Have you never thought of love?" asked poor Claus.

She sighed and sighed again. A wave of rosy colour swept over her face. "I have often thought of it, sir, and contemplate how fine a thing it must be to have a man of much elegance languishing for love of one. A man who should dance with surpassing grace, and be for ever picking up one's handkerchief, or dropping to his knees to beseech but a glance. And at the same time I would have him a man severe toward others, a wit, and also a scholar very much honoured in the world. But I must go now, for I fear Madame will be watching for me and wondering why I am so long."

When they reached the tree to which Claus had tied his horse, he proposed that she should ride the rest of the way.

"I think that would be nice," she an-

swered, brightening, for her steps had lagged in spite of herself.

He took off the saddle and strapped his coat over the back of the horse, and then lifted her up, remembering at the same time how tired little Peggy had also gotten the time he brought her home. There was a touching pathos, he thought, in the fact that they had both returned so wearied by their first experience away from the castle.

He led the horse, carrying the discarded saddle over his shoulder. The sun was near setting and cast level rays through the woods. When they were near the castle, Ann insisted upon going ahead alone. She felt vaguely that it would displease Madame to see her returning with the hunter.

So Claus lifted her down and stood and watched her until she entered the gate. She turned and smiled and waved her hand. He stood still some moments, then, heavy-hearted, mounted and rode away.

Ann, as she passed in, noted with tri-

umph that the gate still remained open. She sauntered with an affectation of carelessness, in case Madame's eyes should be upon her, to the garden. In her customary corner Peggy sat sewing, surrounded by her dolls and pets.

"Why have you that key?" she asked, as Ann sat down on the grass beside her.

"Because I am no longer to be treated as a child. But I have much to tell you. I saw our father's coach this afternoon, and —" she checked herself at the expression on Peggy's face. "Why, what is it, sweetheart? What has grieved you? I see! You are offended that I did not take you with me?"

The yellow head, drooping piteously, shook a denial. "I care not for the world. Why was it my brother was glad to see me here, but when I went to find him he had forgotten me?"

"I don't know," answered Ann, troubled.

"He looked like you, yet was not like you, but I loved him as I do you. Oh, Ann, I have thought how much I could

do for him. I observed he knew not how to mend his clothes, and the lace on his shirt was torn and needed much fine darning."

In the face of such sorrow as this, Ann had not the heart to relate the pleasant adventure that had befallen her.

Peggy went on sewing, and did not speak again. After awhile, Ann, discouraged by the silence, rose. "I think I will take the key back to Madame."

She went first to the chapel. Not finding her there, she went on up to the drawing-room.

"Here is the key," she said, closing the door behind her, for Madame was sensitive to draughts.

Madame, her hands gripping the arms of her chair, felt that the terrible struggle of the afternoon to live until Ann should return had been in vain. All those tender words surging through her mind, — were they to remain unuttered? Death rising higher seemed to reach her throat and choke her. She was conscious that the sun was setting, that at this hour the

Christian Indians she had taught sat circle-wise upon the ground, bowing their heads to the earth in prayer and devotion. How many duties awaited her ! Ann was listening for her words. And yet the threads of life were slipping from her fingers ! Love, stronger for the time than death, swept over her. She held out her hand. At that divinely tender gesture, the tone of that voice, Ann realised to its fullest extent the love that had been hers,—realised it in the brief instant it took her to cross the room, to fling herself at Madame's knees, to bury her head in her lap.

"I will never disobey you again," she sobbed. "I do not want to go to England. I will not go. No, no !" She felt trembling hands laid on her head.

"Ann," said Madame, "look at me."

She raised her face and saw the worn and glorified countenance bending over her, caught the divine brightness of the patient eyes. A hush fell on her ; her tears ceased to flow, her sobs were checked.

"Ann," continued the tender voice,

“weigh not your childish naughtiness against the joy and comfort you have given me. When I am gone, remember that I said to you you never caused me pain. Do not grieve, my child. You have been my comfort, my joy.”

Ann put her hands over her face with a bitter cry. “You will break my heart if you leave me. Oh, take me with you! Oh, do not leave me!”

“Child, child,” said poor Madame, “’tis but the lying down to sleep.” She strove to recall all she had meant to say. “Live righteously from your youth upwards. Do no evil, for although you repent, yet shall that sin rise in you and accuse you when most you would speak nobly to others. A sin is never done. It walks ever beside one, whispering, ‘Who are you?’”

Ann saw the dying eyes fill with terror. “But not you,” she cried, “you who are so good!”

That strange and subtle smile she had seen so often flitted over the pale face. Then the old love and gentleness came

back into her expression. Her feeble hand strove to put the kneeling girl aside, as though she would rise and go to some one.

"My child, my little one," she murmured.

Ann put her strong young arms around the fragile figure. Madame's face fell against the girl's shoulder. Now did Ann see how wan that cheek, how sunken the patient mouth and eyes.

"Open the window that I may have air," murmured Madame, "and send Peggy. I have something to say to her."

"The window is open," whispered Ann; "see, the breeze blows my hair across your cheek."

Later, as she thus knelt in the fading daylight, supporting Madame, she heard laughter in the hall, and then Peggy calling her.

"Ann, where are you? My brother has come back to me from out the world. He found the gate open and came in."

She heard steps pass the door and then return.

"Madame," said Peggy's blithe voice,

"here is my brother." She pushed the door open, and put her smiling little face inside the room. Back of her, Ann saw standing a young man.

"Madame is dead," she said.

When they sought old Naukoska, to tell him the news, they found but the ancient worn-out body in its accustomed place. The faithful spirit had fled. Naukoska, the old watch-dog, would sit in the sun at the gate no more.

And it seemed to Ann that Death, like a terrible figure, had strode in the gate her own wilful hands had opened and summoned her beloved guardian, and, passing out again, had touched old Naukoska, too.

With the going out of Madame, the world came in.

Chapter VI

IN the fall of that year Sir John and his two sisters went abroad. They took with them three Mohawk chiefs who were to be presented to George III.

The summer following Madame Van Vrankin's death had passed like a dream to Ann, and in after years she could not recall the events of that time with any clearness of vision. The guests Sir William then entertained had shown the two girls much attention, particularly the women, whose gaiety was fully equalled by their kindness. To Ann they were the bright fancies of an unreal world. Wrapped deep in her grief and remorse, she shrank from them, and was thankful when within a few weeks the party was broken up and she was left to a solitude broken only by her own family or by an occasional call from Mr. Claus.

He generally spent an hour or two chatting of public affairs, of town-gossip in Albany, of his own adventures in the forest, hoping thus to divert her thoughts from too great dwelling on her sorrow. He was the only person to whom she spoke of Madame, finding always entire sympathy. While they talked she would work at what was indeed a veritable labour of love, — the altar-cloth that the patient hands had left unfinished. Often, as he watched that lightly stepping, girlish figure before the embroidery-frame, as she drew the length of silk in and out, he let the conversation lag, content merely to watch her. A sense of his own unworthiness did not weaken his determination to win her for his wife, but this he told himself should be only when he could bring her an honoured name and independent fortune.

The change occasioned by the long sea voyage brought back Ann's old brightness and colour. Before they reached London she found herself talking to Peggy of Madame, tenderly, but without tears.

Sir John found pleasant accommodations at the White Swan in a fashionable part of town. He procured a large parlour on the second floor, with a bed-chamber adjoining, and took rooms for himself and the Indians on the other side of the hall.

While Peggy dressed for supper the day they arrived, Ann, who had been first to get ready, sat at the window that was open, for the day was mild. She looked out upon London roofs and chimneys enveloped in smoke, illumined by the yellow rays of the setting sun.

"Ann," said her sister, sitting on the floor to draw on her shoes, "how queerly the ladies dress in London town. I was watching them go by while you were unpacking. It struck me their dress was most queer."

"Why, I thought their attire quite ravishing," replied Ann, who had picked up this latter word from one of her father's guests. "I wish now I had taken more note as to how the gentlewomen at the Hall looked, but I was too sad to

think on dress. But now I am most uncomfortable regarding our own appearance. Shall I braid your hair?"

"Why, I didn't think of our looks," answered the little maid, handing Ann the brush and seating herself before the mirror; "for truth to tell, Ann, I could scarce restrain myself from laughing at their little waists and mincing walk when John took me for a stroll this afternoon. I was forced to stuff my kerchief politely in my mouth. Oh, dear me, how you pull! Madame was so gentle when she brushed my hair. 'So,' she would say, 'so, my little Peggy, we will brush it until it is fine and golden as the silk tassel of corn in the ear. 'Tis well to keep the body beautiful that it may be the fitting temple of the Holy Ghost.' But I didn't love Madame as I do you or John. I wept much more because Naukoska went away. Alas! he had tales yet which he had not told me, and now I shall never hear them."

"It is all like a dream to me, our life at the castle," answered Ann, solemnly; "let us never talk of it more."

They had been in London some ten days when Lady Betty Fitzhugh called upon them. She was an old friend of their father.

The two girls, much excited, ran out into the hall to greet their visitor, who came puffing up the stairs by the aid of a gold-headed walking-stick: her voluminous figure in ashes-of-roses silk quite filled the narrow way. Ann, glancing over the banister as she went around to the head of the stairs, noted a young man following. He looked up as she looked down, and she met a pair of blue eyes frankly interested. She hurried blushing by to greet Lady Betty.

"How de do, my dears," said that person, in a mellow, vigorous voice; "my Lud, how quaint ye be with your braids! Eh, Tony?"

"If you will explain how I am to see through you, my dear aunt, I—" commenced the young man.

"Tut, tut, you're always finding fault, Tony. When I catch my breath, I'll get out of the way. Perdition take the rascal

that built these stairs !” While she spoke she was smiling at Ann. “ My, my, what a pretty face. There, don’t let that spoil you. Handsome is as handsome does. Is your father as good-looking as ever? Come and kiss me, my love.” She planted a sounding kiss on the young girl’s cheek. “ Come here, little one,” to Peggy.

Peggy drew back against the wall. “ I desire not that you should kiss me.”

“ Hoity-toity, miss,” retorted the other, “ you’ll yet go begging for a kiss. ’Tis the wind-up of coy maids, and a deserving fate.” She stepped aside, and made room for her companion.

“ My dears, let me make you acquaint with my nephew, Mr. Anthony Dashwood; a great flirt, I warn you, but he has pretty manners, and is a man of parts. Come, speak up, Tony.”

“ My dear aunt,” protested he, laughing, “ speak up, indeed ! You have quite driven from my mind the pretty speech I had ready to say. Speak up, indeed !” He bowed over Ann’s hand, kissing her

finger tips. "I am most honoured to make your acquaintance."

Peggy, whom Ann had carefully instructed, bobbed a curtsey, and hastily retreated, her hands behind her.

"Will you please come this way?" spoke Ann, shyly directing her callers to the parlour.

Lady Betty seated herself in the most substantial chair in the room, and untied the strings of her bonnet, which was very elegant. A wreath of pink roses inside the scuttle brim encircled her face, purple as a full-blown peony. Three nodding ostrich tips fell over from the back. She began to fan herself. Her black lace mitts most revealed by half-concealing her sole beauty, well-turned wrists and plump white hands.

"You have a charming view," remarked Mr. Dashwood, strolling over to the window; "but what is this I see? As I live, the flies have found the honey a'ready!"

"Honey?" repeated Ann, following him to the window. She perceived only a group of servants gossiping below with

Lady Betty's coachman. On the opposite side of the street, which bordered a park, sauntered two young gentlemen arm in arm, as it was the fashion then for the beaux to walk ; each swung his cane in his free hand, and cast languishing glances up at the window.

"The Honey and the Flies," repeated Mr. Dashwood, "I must write a rhyme on that, what d'ye say, Aunt Betty?" He seated himself, and glanced pleasantly around the room. His blond hair, too bushy to permit the wearing of a wig, added an effect of picturesque disorder to his appearance. His dress had no suggestion of foppishness and was of plain bottle-green cloth.

"Where is that handsome brother of yours?" he inquired. "I had the honour of meeting him a year or so ago, or was it three? I forget ; I never trouble myself trying to remember dates. It disturbs the poetic faculty."

"John has gone for his morning walk," answered Ann, "but he will be home soon."

“And how is your good father, my love?” put in Lady Betty. “I haven’t seen him in years. My, my, how I’d love to talk over old times with him! I wonder if he would remember Dicky Denniston. Did he ever speak of him? Do tell me, is your father at all gray yet? When you write, ask him if he knew that Nancy Walton ran off with another woman’s husband? He used to think Nancy a beauty. What a witch she was! And you must tell him that old Caswell left his money to that worthless nephew of his, after all. And he’s made ducks and drakes of it. But come, my dear, tell me how he is.”

“He is well,” said Peggy. “He is married to an Indian squaw. I hope they will both die soon, for John says it is a disgrace, but he says they are good for many years yet. John is going to manage the Indians in a different way from my father when it comes his turn.”

Lady Betty jumped at the commencement of Peggy’s speech, and gasped at its conclusion. “What a remarkable child!”

she exclaimed. "How extraordinary! Did you hear her, Tony?" She turned severely on Peggy. "Don't you know any better than to mention such subjects in company? Did you ever see this savage woman? Oh, poor William! I tell you, Tony, I blame Nancy Walton for this, the jilt! Do you suppose he's really married to her?"

"How should I know?" he laughed. "But what a delightful child! I suppose she's what we worldlings would call a child of nature." His bright, pale eyes twinkled with amusement as he looked at Peggy.

"I have no doubt she is some low, savage creature who wears nose-rings," continued his aunt.

"Peggy is mistaken," said Ann, with trembling dignity, "my father is very good and kind."

Mr. Dashwood straightened himself up suddenly, and his expression became grave. "Forgive us for distressing you, Lady Johnson. We Londoners know so little of the Americans that we get wrong ideas of them, perhaps. But I now recol-

lect that travellers have reported the Indians to be a fine-looking people, and that some of the young girls — squaws, I believe you call them — are quite attractive, though swarthy. But we are forgetting our errand. We want to take you to the theatre to see Garrick in *Lear*, that is, if you haven't already seen him. You'll have to take your kerchiefs, for — ”

He was interrupted by the entrance of Sir John, who came in with a fresh colour in his dark face. He carried a little hand-muff then in fashion, and had a posy fastened in the buttonhole of his blue coat, the tails of which were stiffly wadded and lined with canary satin.

“ My dear boy,” cried Lady Betty, “ I but just received your note or I should have been here before. I've been abroad with some friends, and — ”

“ I know,” he interrupted, kissing her cheek, “ I'm content to have you here at last. But come, what d'ye think of my two pretty sisters? Ann has her tantrums, but I can manage her, I find. Now I want you to take them in charge.

They're going to court and must have the right sort of fol-de-rols. Mr. Dashwood, how is the gentle muse?" turning to shake hands with the other visitor.

"Like a woman, truly," answered Mr. Dashwood, "one day she flouts me, and the next she smiles."

"The jade!" cried Sir John. "Let her go, turn your back, and she'll come tripping after."

"We called to see what you thought of going to the theatre to-night," continued Mr. Dashwood.

"He has nothing to say about it," put in Lady Betty. "These children are going with me to-night to see something of the town. There, I've put my foot down and I sha'n't budge. Go they shall!"

"I protest I'm most willing," said Sir John.

"Well, help me up," she rejoined. "Tony, my stick. John, bend down; I want to whisper to you. I hope 'tis n't true your father is married to a savage. Oh, but I see by your face that it is. Don't laugh! I consider it was very im-

proper on his part. And he that was so set on Nancy Walton. Poor Nancy ! But help me up, you scalawag. Now, my love," turning to Ann, "let your hair be as it is for to-night. I protest 'tis most girlish and sweet. 'Twill attract attention to you, and being lately come from Boston —"

"Not from Boston, madame," interrupted Peggy, "but from near Albany."

"Oh, well," rejoined Lady Betty, tying her bonnet-strings, "'tis all one and the same in America, and being lately come from Boston, as I was saying, 'twill be expected that you be surprising queer in some ways."

On the threshold as she went out she paused. "John, never be or do anything you would be ashamed to have your pretty sisters know. And as for you, my dears, never be anything less pretty than your looks, and I trow this world will be a better place for your living in it. Lack-a-mercy me ! When I think that here I am without a chick or a child to keep me from growing old and selfish ! And your mother,

who had three, to be in her grave these many years ! ”

“ John,” cried Ann, when the door had closed on their visitors, “ is it true our father has married a squaw ? ”

Her brother was lounging in a chair, watching Peggy fill his pipe for him as he had taught her. Ann felt a pang of homesickness. How often and how lovingly she had performed the same little office for her father !

“ There, that will do,” said Sir John, taking the pipe from his sister. It had a quaintly carved bowl of soapstone and a stem three feet long, curiously wound with braids of bright porcupine quills.

“ If he has,” continued Ann, “ I never could love him again.”

“ I never did,” put in Peggy, “ because he never loved me.”

“ I never want to go home again, never, never,” said Ann.

“ Come, come, my sweet high and mighty sister,” said Sir John. “ ’Tis not so bad. Molly is a handsome woman with the mind of a man. Not a common

squaw, by any manner of means. She's educated, and can read and write."

"Molly," echoed Ann, in terror and disgust, "is that her name? Do these Indians who are here with us know it? Oh, I am so ashamed!"

He laughed, puffing at his pipe. "Cluck, cluck, cluck, little-hen-with-her-feathers-wet," he mocked.

Ann wept awhile, her kerchief to her eyes. A thought of the evening passed through her mind. After all, Sir William, his Indian wife, Castle Johnson, even the memory of Madame, seemed very far away, shadowy and unreal.

"Peggy," said she, taking her kerchief from her eyes, "you must wear your new blue hair ribbons to-night. And we'll put on the pearls that were our mother's around our necks. To think Madame had our mother's jewels hidden away all those years among her own things, and never showed them to us."

A little later, Sir John put down his pipe and accompanied the Indians on a visit to the House of Lords.

From their windows the two girls watched them until they passed from sight. The three chiefs strode along majestically in single file, imperturbable to the stares and comments showered upon them by the passers-by.

They occasioned no anxiety to their young guardian, who discovered that they were content to be without his society, and so supplied them with money as his father had directed, and left them, on the whole, very much to their own devices. They spent much time in the tavern drinking and gambling among themselves. Sometimes the three went for a stroll through the town, to be followed home by an admiring and curious, but respectful crowd. Knowing well their haughty natures, Sir John saw that every honour was accorded their rank, and when they were inclined to become angry at not being granted an immediate audience by George III., he invented excuses, and beseeched them to be patient. Fortunately, Sir Joshua Reynolds expressed his desire to make portraits of them, and they, to the delight

of the great painter, sat to him for hours at a time, with majestic, solemn vanity. They never went anywhere in the evening, and retired early, first repairing to the parlour of the girls for a visit with them and their brother. These were occasions of real joy to Peggy, who chatted freely to them in their own language. The youngest chief, Owhera, the Wind, had become a convert to Christianity through the efforts of Madame Van Vrankin, and had been educated at the expense of Sir William, ever generous in advancing civilisation among his children, as he termed the People of the Long House. This young fellow took much simple pride in talking to Ann and John in stilted English. Ann was always particularly gracious to him.

But when the three Indians filed in this night after supper, she unconsciously let coldness and hauteur creep into her manner, so ashamed was she of her father's marriage. She feared that they might also know it, and respecting Sir William less, because of his familiarity,

visit a certain disrespect upon his children.

On their way to the theatre in the seclusion of the coach, Sir John scolded her roundly for her attitude. His father had instructed him too well in diplomatic dealing with the Indians for him to permit Ann to offend them. He himself never failed in tact, although this uniform courtesy was purely a virtue of circumstance and policy.

Chapter VII

IT was a crisp fall night, with stars twinkling overhead. The Drury Lane Theatre was a long way from the White Swan. The girls, Ann in spite of her brother's sharp scolding, were in a state of delightful excitement, and pressed their faces against the glass doors at every crossing where the yellow street lamps shone down on the hurrying crowds.

There was a confused blocking of coaches and chairs in front of the play-house, and so they had to get out some distance from the entrance and pick their way through the mud amidst a mob of rough fellows gathered to see the fine ladies and gentlemen. Sir John walked between his sisters, who clung timidly to him.

The theatre was already well filled.

Lady Betty, elegantly attired in peach-bloom silk, wearing an enormous white

wig, and with wide green ribbons tied on her walking-stick, waited them in her box.

“Tony was to dine somewhere or other,” she explained, “but he will be in later. John, I protest you’re as good-looking as your sisters. Sit down in front of me, there, my dears, and you, John, next to me. My love,” leaning forward and patting Ann’s knee, “your cheeks are as pretty as any posies I ever saw, but a trifle delicate. I must show you how to put on a dash o’ red.”

“I thank you, madame,” replied Ann, embarrassed, “I should not like to put paint on my face. ’Tis only the Indian women at home who do that. I am distressed at the thought.”

“Oh, la-de-da, child, don’t be so highfalutin,” retorted her hostess; “before many years she’ll be glad enough of a dash o’ red, eh, John? Peaches-and-cream doesn’t last for ever. Lord, could you have seen my complexion! Real Irish, red and white and fine as silk.”

The interior of the theatre was almost square. There was a gallery in the back,

supported by pillars. The two girls noted that a number of footmen sat in the pit, and John explained to them that these servants were sent early to hold down good seats until their masters or mistresses should arrive.

"Every one is looking at you, my chickadeedes," whispered Lady Betty. "Ha, ha, John, look at Sir Curiosity Walpole. There, over there in that box. It takes him to find a new beauty. Ah, my dears, I never was enjoying myself more."

"I do not wish to stay longer," cried Ann, frightened. She had suddenly become conscious of many faces turned her way.

Mr. Dashwood entered at that moment. His frank, warm greeting restored her composure. He was much touched by her startled and appealing glance. In that painted and powdered assembly, she, with her smooth young face so innocent of patches and powder, her deep blue eyes, and her black hair braided in such maidenly fashion, seemed a crea-

ture from a far-away and more beautiful world, and he, with his love of poetry, felt she might indeed personify the Muse. He placed a bag of oranges in her lap. "I thought you might enjoy them," he remarked, and, drawing up a chair, seated himself slightly behind her.

That was a night of nights for Ann. As the tragedy of *Lear* unfolded itself on the stage she lost consciousness of her surroundings. She knew nothing of the many glances turned on her and her sister, of the fact that Lady Betty and Sir John, sitting in the background, spent the time giggling and gossiping and taking snuff, nor that Peggy, worn-out by the glitter and excitement, sat bolt upright in her chair in the front of the box, sound asleep.

When at last the curtains were drawn on the final scene, the repressed tears streamed from Ann's eyes, and she sobbed aloud.

Mr. Dashwood only observed her. He wrapped her cloak around her, took

the bag of oranges, and drew her hand through his arm.

Sir John and Lady Betty roused Peggy and followed the other two out. Outside the confusion was so great that, after vainly trying to find a coach or chair, they decided to walk to the coffee-house several squares away.

The cool breeze dried Ann's tears, but she continued to tremble with nervousness. She was in an exalted mood. Wonderful plans flitted through her mind. "I, too," she breathed, raising her face to the starry sky, "I, too, some day. Oh, Madame, do you look down and see me here where I so longed to be!"

"It is not much farther now," said Mr. Dashwood, whose arm she still held.

Back of them came the rest of their party.

"Did you ever meet Garrick, Mr. Dashwood?" she asked.

"Many times," he answered; "one cannot say which is the more charming of the two, he himself, or his wife. She was wondrous beautiful when young. Zoffany

painted her picture. They said that to see her dance played upon the emotions like sweetest music. In her way she was said to be as great as her husband, and then she is so charming and gentle."

"I do not believe any one could be as great as Mr. Garrick," cried Ann, with such pretty enthusiasm that her companion was wholly captivated, "and if you will pardon me for contradicting you, sir, no one could be as charming. I could scarce keep from weeping to-night; indeed, I will admit it to you, for I fear you saw me, I did shed a tear or two."

"Or three," put in Mr. Dashwood, "or four. Nay, I swear I counted four pearly drops."

She blushed. "Oh, sir, I fear you will think me lacking in worldly experience that I should weep with such ease!"

"Nay," he answered, "I do but admire your possession of so tender a heart. Why, so exquisite are the sensibilities of Garrick, that often he works himself up into such a frenzy that the tears stream from his eyes. I have never yet wept at the

play, for I cannot delude myself into the belief that 'tis real, but sometimes, when watching the sunset or gazing at the stars, I have felt the tears rise, and I think on the poems I mean to write some day. They say that Shakespeare is not more admired nowadays for writing his plays than little Garrick is for acting them. And 'tis true. But envy speaks, too, and though the speech sounds fair enough on the surface, jealousy turns it sour. However, I never had the stomach some have against play-actor people. Why not that as well as a painter, why not?"

"Why not?" echoed Ann, loyally.

"And did you notice," asked Mr. Dashwood, "with what expressiveness he raised his eyebrows or darted a fiery glance, or tore at his hair, or, anon, nodded in pensive mood?"

"I did not observe," she said, regretfully, "for Garrick seemed not Garrick to me, only Lear, and I wept for the poor old man. Hereafter I shall take more notice of his gestures, for I am going to be an —"

“Hush,” said he, with a droll glance, putting his finger to his lips, “don’t let my Aunt Betty hear.” And then he laughed with such heartiness that she was puzzled. “Here we are at last,” he added, turning to look for the rest of their party.

They took seats in one of the wooden stalls that lined the room, and which, giving some small degree of privacy, at the same time enabled them to see the other people sitting at the general tables. At these public tables were to be seen chiefly young barristers, and merchants, and country gentlemen, who gathered at the coffee-house to discuss the play. These conversations were always given in a loud voice for the benefit of the listeners in the stalls.

Mr. Dashwood pointed out a strange, rough-looking old man with a red face. He was the centre of a group of young men, who now and then burst into loud laughter at his sallies, which, in contrast to their own utterances, were given in a tone inaudible to the occupants of the stall.

This man, Mr. Dashwood explained, was a physician of remarkable talent, which had been dissipated by too great indulgence of the theatre and a love of conviviality, so that now he had descended to being merely a physician for play-actors, and spent his whole time tippling and gossiping at the taverns, where his wit drew around him many young professional men. While he thus pointed out different people of note to Ann and Peggy as they waited for their supper, Lady Betty showed Sir John a new trick at cards.

Later, as they were eating and drinking with much merriment, the two girls were startled to hear Lady Betty swear roundly at the waiter for spilling a dish of gravy on her gown.

Neither of the young men appeared surprised, and Sir John tittered.

"A pox on you for laughing!" cried she, angrily. "I'd like to cuff your impudent ears, John!" Though she ate more heartily than any of them, her good-nature did not return, so it was a relief

when she rose abruptly and announced that she was tired and was going home to bed.

They called a coach and piled in. Mr. Dashwood sat on the box with the driver, owing to the lack of room inside. They stopped first at the White Swan, and there Sir John and his sisters got out. Mr. Dashwood leaned down from the box to hand Ann the bag of oranges. She saw the outline of his head with its cocked hat and his fluttering cape dark against the starlit sky, and though she could not distinguish his features, she knew his expression corresponded to the pleasant tones of his voice as he bade her good night.

The two girls, after they undressed, divided and ate one of the oranges, and then turned the remainder of the fruit out on a plate. They found a note addressed to Ann in the bottom of the bag.

Wonderingly she opened it, and the two read it, sitting in their long white nightgowns on the edge of the bed. It contained a poem entitled *The Honey*

and the Flies and held many allusions to gallant lovers hovering about a mysterious fair lady, as flies about a honey-jar. The poem was signed :

“Madame,

“Yr. Admir’g & Obedt. Servant,

“ANTHONY DASHWOOD.”

“It’s most queer,” said Peggy, puzzled. “What does he mean? I never liked poetry. Oh, don’t you wish it were honey? Do you remember how good it used to taste when the Indian women brought it to the castle? Let us snuff the candle now and climb into bed. Then, dear Ann, will you not tell me the story old Naukoska used to tell us about the red squirrel? ’Tis late, yet I am not sleepy, are you?”

“No,” answered Ann, “that is because it is past our usual bedtime. Madame would say so, were she here. That is wondrous beautiful poetry, though you don’t understand it.”

Peggy climbed up into the high-canopied bed, and sank down into the puffy

feather mattress with a shiver of delight at the chilly softness. "The maid did not come with the warming-pan to-night, and the sheets are nice and cold," she announced.

Ann crept into the bed and put her arms around her. "I'm going to tell you a secret, Peggy," she said, "but you must never tell John, lest he tease me. Mr. Dashwood meant that I was the honey in his poem."

"Oh, dear Ann," cried little Peggy, laughing, "you are so sleepy that you do not know what you are saying. How could you be the honey? But it was a queer jingle. It surprises me not that it did confuse you. And now that I'm in bed, I've changed my mind about hearing the story of the red squirrel, and think it would be nicer to turn over and go to sleep."

That night she dreamed old Naukoska came to her bedside and took her by the hand, and she went with him, all in her white nightgown and barefooted, to a forest where they followed a winding path

shadowed by trees, until they came to a small, clear space of velvet greenness. In the middle was a wonderful golden dome. This, Naukoska told her, was where all the honey in the world came from. She picked a twig, and was about to thrust it into the honey to get a taste of it when she awoke.

The next day she told this dream to the Indians, and they assured her that it was an omen of plenty. From that time homesickness waxed strong in the little maid's heart, and in secret she pined much, unknown to Ann and John.

Chapter VIII

SOON the arrival of young Sir John Johnson's two pretty sisters was a popular subject of conversation at the coffee-houses, which took the place of clubs for the man about town. Some officers who had visited their father in his American wilds, and heard of the two girls reared in such mysterious seclusion, added piquant details to the current gossip. The three, in company with the Indians, were often to be seen taking an airing on the green of a pleasant morning.

George III. signified his desire to meet them and the chiefs at the next drawing-room. They were to attend court half an hour before the formal opening of the evening entertainment.

Lady Betty herself selected the girls' dresses, and sent her own maid and a professional hair-dresser to help them. She

called before they started to see that the finishing touches were correct. They were ready and waiting when she arrived, Ann in a glow of excitement, and Peggy inclined to be cross because her sister would not permit her to sit down for fear she would disturb the folds of her skirt.

“Tut, child,” reproved Lady Betty, “if you mind your good looks so little you’ll not bag the game you might. Men may sigh and ogle a country wench with a big waist and a milk-white skin, and write verses to the Queen of Curds and Cream, but when it comes to marrying, then good-by, my pretty maid! ’Tis a woman of fashion, they cry. I know ’em, a worthless lot. Eh, John? Stand in the centre of the room. Now, my dears, turn around slowly.”

The hair-dresser, Lady Betty’s woman and Sir John, each held a candle high that the light might fall on the two girls and enable her to discover any needed touches in their toilet.

They were in truth a lovely pair. Their hair, arranged in the new fashion set by

the young queen, fell in ringlets around their faces. Ann's slender figure carried well the hoops then in vogue. But the fashion which so became her made of Peggy as quaint a little Dutch figure as if she had but just stepped from the frame of an old master. Both wore white brocade, with the sole difference that Ann's quilted under-petticoat was embroidered in silver thread, and Peggy's was in gold. They had put on the pearls and jewelled ornaments they had found among Madame Van Vrankin's things after her death, and which they believed to have been their mother's. There was a pearl stomacher which Peggy wore.

They started for the royal palace just at twilight, when the flickering street-lamps seemed to struggle palely with the lingering day, and the streets were filled with people returning home from work. The girls were startled by the rough fellows and market-women, who followed the sedan-chair in which they were, and peered in at them through the glass door, and jostled the bearers, who swore roundly.

After a little, however, they perceived that the glances and remarks were good-natured and admiring, and so they were no longer alarmed.

Sir John, attired in saffron satin and velvet coat, was borne in the chair behind. But the comments the three evoked were slight to those occasioned by the Indians, who scornfully refused to be carried, and strode in single file after the chairs. They were dressed in all the insignia of their rank, and were carrying their gifts to the king.

On arriving at the palace, they proceeded to the drawing-room, where they were at once announced.

At the farther end of the long room was a group of people. As they advanced, a stout young man stepped forward to meet them. Not until her brother knelt and kissed the stranger's hand, did Ann realise that this pudgy-faced young gentleman was George III. She curtsied. As she looked around for Peggy, she was mortified to perceive that the little maid, forgetting to curtsey, had dropped be-

hind with the Indians, and, following their example, was staring solemnly about her.

His Majesty then spoke to the chiefs, and Owhera replied for his fellows and himself in stilted but dignified English. The king then requested him to speak in his own language, and listened with much amusement to the guttural sounds, which were afterward translated for him.

The eldest warrior then took off the beautiful wampum collar he wore, and put it around his Majesty's neck. The second chief stepped forward, and laid lightly around the shoulders of his royal host a magnificent Buffalo robe. The inner skin of this robe was embroidered with brilliant porcupine quills, and further ornamented by painted scenes, recording the warrior's important adventures while hunting and fishing. Owhera then presented his gift of a polished bow and quiver of arrows.

They were then taken to the queen, who was the centre of the group at the farther end of the room. Ann was much disappointed in her appearance. She had

a rosy face, with a nose that turned up. Her auburn ringlets were confined by a circlet of diamonds, and she wore also a diamond stomacher. A fair little page supported her train.

Their Majesties were as delighted with the Indians as with new toys. The young ladies-in-waiting clustered around, giving little gasps and small shrieks, when the dusky visitors chanced to glance at them. Before it was time for the public drawing-room to begin, tea on a silver waiter was brought in, and all partook of this light refreshment, a dish of tea being given first to the queen by one of the young ladies, who presented it kneeling. Chairs were then arranged, as there was to be music.

Soon the room was filled, and the entertainment began. Their Majesties and the other members of the royal household sat in the front row of chairs. The ladies who came occupied the remaining chairs, while the gentlemen stood back of them, or leaned against the side walls. Just before the music commenced, Sir John sent the

Indians home, and George III. took off, with a sigh of relief, the buffalo robe and wampum collar in which he had been sweltering for the sake of policy, rather than courtesy, for he knew well the importance of the Indians' favour should the trouble now brewing in the Colonies terminate in war.

While the music was going on, Ann, who had an end seat, noticed near her a little gentleman in an exaggerated white wig, a scarlet coat, and a waistcoat with gold peaks. He leaned against the wall with folded arms. Now, he dropped his head upon his breast like one deep in serious thought, or smiled as at some secret jest, again glanced upward as if enraptured by the music. Suddenly, attracted by her intense look, he turned, and she met the direct gaze of his wonderful eyes, large, black, and more brilliant than any she had ever seen.

When the performance ceased and chairs were pushed aside, she, forgetful of all else, stepped forward to greet Mr. Garrick.

“Oh, sir,” cried she, “I have seen you play,” and then, forgetful of all else, so content was she merely to look at him, she stood smiling, her sweet face illumined by the admiration that filled her.

George III. had been an ordinary and far from attractive person to her, but now at last she stood before him who was a king in very truth in her sight, although his kingdom lay behind the foot lights and his crown was paste, and he had “played with a straw for a sceptre.”

Mr. Garrick, his hand to his heart, bowed low. So delicate were his susceptibilities, so deeply he felt this tribute to his genius, that his eyes grew moist.

“Madame, you do me great honour. I thank you upon my knees, so to speak.”

As she was about to reply, Sir John approached.

“I see you have met Mr. Garrick,” he remarked. “Sir,” turning to the actor, “since first she did set eyes on you it has been Garrick this and Garrick that, Garrick here and Garrick there, in short, Garrick everywhere! I have heard your virtues,

your charms, dinged in my ears till, had it not been for my real admiration for you, I should have fled your praises. Yes, sir, I should have fled 'em ! I'll leave you in your present good company, Ann, for I want to talk to an old flame of mine who turned green with envy when she saw me with Peggy."

Mr. Garrick had looked uncomfortable during the first part of Sir John's speech, for fear he was ridiculing him, but smiled less doubtfully when he finished.

"Will you not do me the honour of taking my arm, Lady Johnson," he asked, "and we will promenade the length of the room. It is a real grief to me," he continued, as they fell into step, "that there are so few who appreciate the worthy lesson the stage teaches ; still, the gentry is setting an example to the lower classes by preferring a well-acted drama to a vulgar spectacular exhibition. Now, in America, I understand the theatre is quite good."

"I do not know," she replied, "for I never was in a play house until the other night."

“Well, to confess the truth,” admitted her companion, “I never heard anything about the American stage, but I always sincerely endeavour to evince an interest in a foreign country when I meet a native of the place. Unlike most Englishmen, when I go to France I don’t hold myself aloof, but try to learn the manners and customs of that nation. Ah, they, the French people, could not shower enough praise on me, so courteous, so cordial! Yet do not mistake me. ’Twas my art alone won this flattering attention. But Mrs. Garrick, that best of wives, will have it that ’twas I personally they sought to honour.” He laughed quite heartily at this little jest. “Though I admit,” he added, “there was some ridiculous nonsense written home to the papers about the Marquis So-and-So and other persons of quality giving dinners for me.”

Thus they strolled up and down the room, he chatting of light matters until she timidly returned to the subject of the stage. Then she struck fire, and he spoke with a brilliancy and enthusiasm that

enchanted her. Seldom again did their conversation descend to the personal or commonplace.

"But I see you are becoming fagged," he said, at last, conducting her to a quiet corner. "I'll go and get you a dish of tea."

She watched his graceful little scarlet figure threading its way among the guests, then, losing sight of him, turned to find Peggy at her side with a slender, erect gentleman of middle age, who looked like an invalid. His ghastly pale complexion was intensified by his bright dark eyes. His expression seemed a mixture of malice and sweetness. In his fingers knotted by gout he held a snuff-box. He was dressed throughout in lavender.

"This is Mr. Walpole," said Peggy.

"How did you enjoy the music?" he asked Ann, smiling with much sweetness. "Since the new queen came 'tis nothing but twing, twing, twang."

"I liked it," she answered, shyly, a little intimidated by him.

"The queen has quite set the fashion in music," he went on, "indeed she strums

herself. I hope you do not. I never could understand why it was that to be able to strum a few tunes should be considered such an accomplishment. What did you think of her Majesty? Very genteel, eh, but not at all pretty? I distinctly saw a shade of disappointment pass over the face of the king when he first saw her."

Ann smiled vaguely, at a loss for a reply.

"I had the pleasure of meeting your father some years ago," continued Mr. Walpole. "Do tell me is't true he has an Indian wife?"

She nodded, but could not speak. A burning flush spread over her face.

"There was a woman asked me that, too, to-night," put in Peggy. "She wanted to know if my father's wife dressed in skins. She whispered it to me during the music behind her fan. She sat on the other side of me, Ann."

"How impudent," cried Mr. Walpole. "And pray what did you tell Madame Pry?"

"I told her they wore blankets, and then I looked away," answered Peggy.

"Speaking of Indians," went on Mr. Walpole, "reminds me. Is it true that the Bostonians have actually written and not only invited but begged the Pretender to come over and put himself at their head if the Colonies should rebel?"

"I never heard so," answered Ann.

"I've no doubt they did," he rejoined, "they're so sly." He opened and passed her his snuff-box. "Do have a pinch. It's *café-au-lait* and all the rage in Paris."

She refused, for the fashion was an offensive one to her. Peggy took some, however.

"You must pardon my tardiness," spoke Mr. Garrick, appearing suddenly at Ann's elbow with the tea, and looking slightly dishevelled, "but Lady Betty Fitzhugh must go and plant herself right in the doorway and refuse to budge until she got a dish of syllabub. There I was with the people behind pushing, and she never moving. So ungenteel! Ah, good-evening, Mr. Wal-

pole," arching his brows, "I see you have met this charming young lady. And pray, who is—" he paused and glanced at Peggy.

"It is my sister Peggy," answered Ann.

"Peggy?" repeated Mr. Walpole, "Peggy? Ah, ha, my dear Garrick, now why are you blushing? That fiery hue would shame a schoolboy." He hummed, laughing :

" 'The sun first rising in the morn
That paints the dew-bespangled lawn
Does not so much the day adorn,
As does my lovely Peggy.' "

He coughed delicately and touched his lips with his lace kerchief. "Let me see. The next verse runs something like this:

" 'While bees from flower to flower shall rove,
And linnets warble through the grove,
As stately swans the river love,
So long shall I love Peggy.' "

"Sir," said the actor, "your wit is no less sharp than your sentiment is vulgar.

Those verses were falsely accredited to me. I never wrote them." His sensitive face was all in a quiver. "I beg you will excuse me, Lady Johnson. Mrs. Garrick is waiting for me." And he bowed himself away.

"Why did you sing that, Mr. Walpole?" asked Ann, distressed.

He laughed. "'Tis said he wrote those verses to Peg Woffington when he was enamoured of her. Every one knows she jilted him. 'What,' said she, 'am I to wed a Hop o' my Thumb?' He wears false heels to make him taller, you know."

"How could she be so unkind?" cried Ann. "I do not see how any one could refuse to marry such a great man."

"For my part," retorted Mr. Walpole, "I never could understand why people thought it took such marvellous talent to repeat the works of others in one's own language. And there are those who say Garrick is too affected for anything, with his French airs. You can't tell me he hasn't French blood in him. His wife is much more elegant. By the way, she is

Lord Somebody's daughter, as I always supposed. She never looked like an ordinary dancing girl."

"How d'ye do, Mr. Walpole," said Lady Betty, joining them. "My love," beaming on Ann, "they say you and Peggy are going to be all the rage."

"Tis true," said Mr. Walpole, "they say you have so turned the heads of our beaux that they do naught but ogle and sigh beneath your windows. Our beauties are apt to scratch out your eyes."

Ann, remembering the poem of *The Honey and the Flies*, could not help blushing.

They all laughed at her colour, and then Mr. Walpole bade them good evening. "Don't fall in love with Garrick," he warned, shaking his forefinger archly at Ann. "Be a little on your guard. Remember he is an actor."

He extended his snuff-box to Lady Betty and then to Sir John, who had just come up. When they had helped themselves he placed the box in Peggy's hands.

“ My dear young lady, I beg that you will keep this mere trifle to remember me by. And I trust that when I return from my prospective journey on the Continent you will all drink coffee with me on Strawberry Hill. I see their Majesties have at last had the goodness to retire, so I wish you a very good night.” Then with that charming smile, so maliciously sweet, he put his hand to his heart and hummed :

“ ‘ And when Death with his pointed dart
Shall strike the blow that rives my heart,
My words shall be, when I depart,
Adieu, my lovely Peggy ! ’ ”

He bowed and kissed the little maid's finger-tips.

Chapter IX

SO easily Ann assimilated with society, that soon the peculiarities of Madame Van Vrankin's influence and training were not to be noticed in her manner. Often she was offended by the oaths, which the women quite as well as the men, used, and she never could accustom herself to the red and white paint her own sex employed so freely; but she learned to play cards, although her interest in the games was more courteous than real. She sometimes accompanied her brother to small gay parties given at one or another of the popular country inns, whose distance from town gave opportunity for a pleasant drive. And such was her beauty and innocent enjoyment of much that in itself was coarse, but the vulgarity of which she never perceived, and such Sir John's wit and ready money, as well as the

romance with which the gossips' tongues invested them, that they became the lions of the hour.

In the midst of all this gaiety, moods of loneliness often visited Ann, moods in which she looked back with wistful wonder at her old self. That past of dreams and inspiration, and the present with its whirl of pleasure, were widely separated. Her once beloved volume of Shakespeare now lay covered with dust on a shelf. This attitude was as much an instinctive turning from pain as it was a seeking after pleasure. To open that well-marked copy of Shakespeare, was like opening a volume of memories bitter-sweet. Renewed grief for the loss of Madame would sweep over her; the old, ever unsatisfied longing to know of her mother would return; again she would think of her father, his strange second marriage, his many solitary days among a savage people. Most often, however, she thought of that beautiful spring day, the day of her disobedience, the day her first lover met her, and, above all, the day made sacred by Madame's

death. Her mind was strangely confused in regard to these events. Sometimes it seemed to her as if the longing eyes Mr. Claus bent on her that day had been Madame's eyes, or, again, as if it were his, rather than Madame's, whose dying gaze met hers. This fancied resemblance troubled her.

Her nature was too sensitive and tender to become hardened by contact with the world, but she cared no longer to study, and her former ideals became vague. After the first keen delight the novelty her present life brought, she became restless, and turned unsatisfied from one pleasure to another. It was to Garrick that she owed the fact of still cherishing dimly her ambition to become a play-actress. She never rose from having seen him play, without feeling a sense of exaltation that gave her a far more exquisite happiness than any society afforded. She met him seldom, and then only at public affairs, which afforded no opportunity for sustained conversation. His leisure moments were generally spent at the coffee-houses in

the company of literary and professional men. But whenever he met Ann to talk to her, his voice was as the voice of her dreams, speaking to her from out the past. He was said to be affected off the stage, but never so on it. His devotion to his art passed beyond self-consciousness. He divined in the young girl an impersonal sympathy with what he loved best, and all that was noblest in his fine and delicate nature answered to it.

She shrank from mentioning these brief conversations to her brother, fearing his ready ridicule, but she often talked to Peggy nights after they were in bed, sometimes waking the little maid up to do so.

Peggy, on the whole, kept her homesickness secret. She was too stoical to complain; still, there were many times when she refused to accompany the other two out of an evening, and remained at home with her parrot. She sewed and embroidered much, for she was not fond of reading. Ann, coming to bed much later, would sometimes, on putting her face

down beside her sleeping sister's, find the pillow damp with tears. Then, self-reproachful, she would remain at home for several evenings in succession, or insist that Peggy should go out with her. But soon they would relapse into their old ways.

It happened that Ann and Sir John were returning late one night from a supper-party that had followed the theatre, and were startled by their chair being rudely jostled. Ann, who had been half-asleep, her cheek against her brother's sleeve, was frightened by the shouts and sound of people running, and clung to him. The bearers, their progress interfered with, set the chair down. Then they heard a cry that the White Swan was on fire. In a moment Sir John had stepped from the chair to the pavement.

"Sit still for God's sake, Ann!" he cried, pushing her back as she would have followed him. "Don't get into this mob! Tell them to carry you to Lady Betty's."

She saw his flying figure in its light

dress reach the people ahead, pass them and disappear. His training in running and wrestling matches with the Indians was to stand him in good stead this night. She, disobeying his instructions, stepped out from the chair and sped like a deer down the street. At the turn of the second square she saw the red reflection in the sky, another two squares and she came out upon the orange mass of flames dimmed by the whirling smoke. Soon she reached the outskirts of the crowd surrounding the burning tavern. She pushed her way forward. Not a few had their attention attracted from the fire to her brilliant figure, her white shoulders rising from her laces, a fantastic gleam of pearls woven in her black curls.

A couple of rough fellows purposely barred her way.

"I pray you let me pass," she cried, in anguish, "my sister is there."

They laughed rudely. One of them was about to address her coarsely, when a gentleman flung him back and at the same time stepped aside himself.

“Pass, madame,” he said, and she saw that he had drawn his sword.

She slipped by and stood within the circle drawn by the spectators. Her position put her in danger of sparks.

Then for the first time she saw Peggy standing in a window of their apartment. Sir John, below, shouted directions to her. The dear, white-robed little figure stepped upon the window ledge. The hot, bright reflection in the air showed her face serene; her bare feet clung to the ledge.

“I am going to jump,” she cried.

Half a hundred arms were raised to catch her. Ann’s gaze, anticipating her leap, fell. There was a delay, a groan of horror. She looked up in terror. The window was empty. The little figure had disappeared.

“Oh, my God, Peggy!” shouted Sir John.

“She has gone back,” cried a voice.

A tongue of flame from the interior leaped half-across the window. Cries and groans burst forth from the excited mob.

Sir John, heedless of the shouted warn-

ings, flung savagely aside those who sought to restrain him, and dashed into the lower hall of the inn. He was seen bounding up the stairway, keeping close to the wall against which it had been built. The light banister was already in flames at the top. He disappeared. An agony of time went by.

The crowd, expectant of a fearful tragedy, watched in silence.

Ann was rooted to the spot on which she stood. She could not move, she could not pray. She felt that she, as well as Sir John and Peggy, was dying. She remembered her father with anguish.

It was in reality only a few moments before Sir John was seen again. He held a blanketed bundle in his arms. Cautiously, step by step, he descended the stairs, staggering once or twice under his burden. He kept close to the inner wall, for with the falling of the burning banister some of the bricks had given way as well. In the blazing light those nearest could see the perspiration rolling down his face. At the foot of the stairway he hesitated, as

though his strength were nearly gone. Then, nerving himself afresh, he came on over the débris and fiery embers. The trailing end of the blanket caught on a board. He jerked in vain to loosen it, then let it slip to the floor. His sister could now be seen, her arms tight around his neck, her face hidden against his shoulder. A green and red parrot fluttered and screamed in a strange tongue, clinging by its talons to the bosom of the little maid's nightgown. It was to save the bird that she had gone back. Strong hands reached in and took Peggy from her brother's arms. They carried him across the street and laid him on the grass. He commenced crying hysterically. His face and hands were blistered, a falling beam had struck his shoulder and burned through his clothing. His shoes were shrivelled on his feet and had to be cut away. Ann took the poor feet in her lap and cried over them. Fortunately, a physician happened to be on the scene, and he bound Sir John's burns up in linen and cooling salve. She recognised him as

the gentleman who had permitted her to pass nearer to the fire and had thrust aside the rough fellows who delayed her.

They carried Sir John to the nearest inn, where he was undressed and put to bed. The physician, who introduced himself as Dr. O'Keefe, left directions for the night and departed, assuring the anxious sisters that there was no need for fear.

Then Ann for the first time remembered the Indians. Filled with concern, she hurried to the door, intending to go back to the scene of the fire and inquire for them. At the threshold she stumbled, and, looking down, beheld Owhera wrapped in his blanket.

"Is it you, Owhera?" she cried, gladly. "Where are your brothers?"

He rose, and, flinging his arm free of the blanket, made a wide and solemn gesture. "They sleep outside on the ground. They say the stars shall be their roof and that they sleep no more in the white man's wigwam."

"'Tis well," she answered, humouring the sentiment, and pointed to the door

back of her. "He, too, sleeps. Owhera," she added, touched by his faithfulness, "I am pleased that you watch at the door, that I may call you if my brother grows worse."

In the look he gave her she read a personal devotion that startled her. A sudden thought of her father's marriage came to her, and she shrank away, fearing lest the Indian should put into words the admiration in his eyes.

"Good night, Owhera. Tell your brothers to fear not. The good Spirit watches over them." Then she hastily stepped back within her room and shut the door. She leaned against the wall, her heart fluttering wildly. She stood silent, seeking to regain her composure.

Peggy, a wadded quilt wrapped around her over her nightgown, sat on the edge of her brother's bed.

A lighted candle was on the bureau. On the top of the mirror perched the parrot, its brilliant plumage still ruffled from excitement.

Sir John was wakeful, and Peggy sought to amuse him by relating tales.

“And the elder brother became a great hunter and fisher, and had no time for the little brother,” went on the soft voice telling the old wonderful tale of *The Wolf Brother*, “and the sister wore fine wampum and a dress made of feathers of which one was plucked from every bird in the forest, and she, too, did not care for the little brother. So he ran away into the forest and turned into a wolf. Now, the elder brother—”

“Oh, Peggy,” interrupted Ann, “you must never tell that story again! Don’t you understand? That is the way we were, John and I. Oh, Peggy, you are so good, and you don’t understand how wicked I’ve been.”

“Dear Ann,” said Peggy, wonderingly, “you are not wicked. Do you not like me to tell the story of *The Wolf Brother*?”

Sir John, whom pain had made delirious, moved restlessly.

“Who is talking?” he said. “I hear the ravens talking in the tree-tops. Caw, caw, little sister.”

The parrot chattered wildly.

Peggy rose and tiptoed across the room. "Hush," she whispered, sternly, "hush, Terunda, idle babbler, or I will pull out your beautiful tail-feathers."

The parrot, comprehending, fluttered down to the floor and hopped across the room to a dark corner and tucked its head under its wing.

"What are they saying?" asked Sir John, querulously.

"It was not the ravens," answered Peggy, "but Terunda. He says he hears the wind in the tree-tops far, far away, at home. And the trees are swaying their heads together, for they have many secrets."

"The green forest," he murmured.

"And he says he has perched in the tallest tree, and far as he could look it was like a green sea, waving, waving," said Peggy.

"It puts me to sleep," said Sir John, drowsily. "It is uncommon green this season, Peggy. You must call Ann to come and see."

Chapter X

SIR JOHN'S burns, although painful, were not serious, and he waived magnificently any claim to bravery. But Peggy, who was uninjured, drooped and paled from the night of the fire.

He, returning one morning from a stroll, found her alone. He came in limping slightly on a cane, for one foot was still lame. His pallor and semi-invalid airs became him.

"Here are some sweetmeats for you," he remarked, laying a bag on the table. He went over and sat down on the arm of her chair and patted her cheek. "Where is Ann?"

"She has gone shopping," she answered, and then without further ado turned and flung herself on his breast in a paroxysm of sobs.

"Peggy, Peggy, what is the matter?" he asked, alarmed.

"Take me home," she whispered. "I want to go home."

"But why?" he said. "Why do you wish to go? What has happened?"

She raised her head and stared out of the window. She dabbed her wet blue eyes with her kerchief. The cheerful, sunshiny street was bright with people. She frowned. "Nothing has happened, but I am tired of the world," she said, crossly. "And I want to go home."

John caught her in his arms and gave her a sounding kiss. "I'm of like mind," he cried, "and home we go!"

The door was opened and admitted Lady Betty and Ann, followed by the footman, his arms full of bundles.

"Put them on the table, Hawkins," directed Ann, "and then you may go. Your mistress will lunch with us."

"Oh, no, I can't think of it," interposed Lady Betty, "Tony's alone, and —"

"You know you're going to stay," laughed Sir John.

"If it weren't for Tony —" she demurred.

"Tony be hanged!" cried he. "Your absence will give the Lady Muse a chance to visit him. If you do stay we'll have a salad up here and some of that good wine and —"

"Oh, John, John, I fear you're drinking too much for a young man. Still, I don't know that a glass of wine ever did me any harm. But I'm an old woman."

"It never did you a midget of harm," said he, stoutly, "and if drank in good company I'd prick the whining parson who denied it made us jolly."

"Do you think the puce colour would have become you better than this blue tint, Peggy dear?" asked Ann, smoothing the roll of silk in her lap. Since the fire she had been busy replacing her own and her sister's wardrobe. With the exception of the jewels and the gown she had on the night of the fire, all their things were burned.

"I suppose," said Peggy, longingly,

“that you will not care to walk in the park with me this afternoon?”

“Walk in the park with you this afternoon!” echoed Ann. “My Lud, Peggy, when I have been shopping all morning! How inconsiderate you are! I am going to lie down until to-night. How I do ache! I declare, Lady Betty, but I was amazed at the la-de-da airs of that man in the silk-shop. Would you believe it, John, he hadn’t a thing in that shop that pleased me? When I recall how I knew nothing at all about shopping before I came to London, I am modestly amazed at my progress.”

“You do very well, my love,” affirmed Lady Betty, “and I must also say, that for one having had no experience and having come, too, from such a barbarous land,—though no blame attaches to you for that, of course,—I must say you have a very genteel taste.”

“Then you do not wish to walk in the park, this afternoon,” repeated Peggy.

Ann gave her an indignant glance. “How can you act so, Peggy? Here

I've been shopping for you until I ache from head to foot, and you show no gratitude. You used to be so sweet and obliging —" She interrupted herself to smile and bow to some one passing by in the street.

Sir John leaned forward to look out of the window and see to whom she bowed. Then he flung himself back in his chair and laughed uproariously. "Why don't you get a handsome, vigorous fellow like me for a beau?" he cried. "I could twist the neck of that little whipper-snapper with two fingers."

"Tut, tut," said Lady Betty, who had peeked out behind the curtain to see who the young man might be, "he's a great catch."

"Catch or not," cried Sir John, merrily, "I swear I have brains and enough to spare for his noddle. As for you, my sweet sister, look your best on your little beaux, for you'll soon see the last of them. We take passage for America next month."

"What nonsense!" she cried, sharply.

Before he could reply, a strange little sound, between a cry of rapture and a sob, was heard, and Peggy had flown to her brother's embrace.

Ann stared at them with whitening face. She did not need further words to know that the decision was final. "I will not go," she cried, "I—I have a career to make. You will ruin my life if you take me home now, John."

She rose and put her hand on his shoulder, reaching across Peggy's head, which rested on his breast. The little maid looked up defiantly, then pushed her sister away. "You can stay with Lady Betty," she said.

"Yes, yes, my dear, you shall come and live with me," said their visitor, soothingly.

Ann made no reply. She walked to the window and stood looking out of doors. Peggy's words, her gestures, had cut her to the heart. She had volunteered their separation. Under almost any circumstances, Ann would have protested against their going, have done all she could to

bring her brother around to her way of thinking. But, had he decided to go, she would have gone with him and Peggy as a matter of course. To be separated from Peggy,—the thought had never crossed her mind until now. In that bitter hurt moment she realised she stood aloof from these other two, that they had put her outside their common bond of sympathy. Or had she stepped outside of her own accord? At last she turned. Standing now with her back to the window, her face was in shadow, and they did not perceive the tears in her eyes nor her pallor.

“I will stay with Lady Betty,” she said, her heart aching to receive some protest that they would rather stay themselves than leave her behind. The assurance of their devotion was all she needed, at that moment, to cause her to abandon her plan of remaining in London.

Sir John whistled thoughtfully. “I hadn’t thought of that. “It might be a good plan. You ought to make a fine

marriage if you stay. It's time you were married."

"Married!" she cried, hotly. "It is not for you to dictate to me! I shall marry whom and when I please. I am going to be an actress. I must have a career. Mr. Garrick —"

"An actress!" echoed Sir John, and he sank into a chair, convulsed with laughter.

"An actress!" repeated Lady Betty. "Ha, ha, my dear Ann, but you are funny!"

"A career!" cried Sir John, his eyes swimming in merry tears.

"A career!" echoed Lady Betty, shrieking with glee.

"By the head of the Pretender, Garrick!" cried Sir John, holding his aching sides, and winking at Lady Betty.

"Oh, my Lud!" echoed Lady Betty. "Garrick!" and she poked Sir John playfully in the ribs with her walking-stick.

Ann's eyes flashed. She walked over to Sir John, raised her hand, and bestowed a sounding slap upon his cheek. Then

she went into the back room, locked the door, and flung herself, weeping, on the bed.

As the days wore by, she was surprised to find how soon her mind accustomed itself to the thought of the change the parting would bring. To the last, however, she would have renounced gladly her own ambitions, and have returned home with her brother and sister had they asked her to do so. But they took it for granted that her decision to remain in London was final, and so never sought to persuade her otherwise. She, proud and sensitive, sought to conceal how deeply she was hurt. It was Peggy who now wakened nights to find a weeping bedfellow.

“Dear Ann,” she would say, putting out her arm in a sleepy embrace, “do not weep. Perchance John and I will return next year.”

Ann felt always that it was no grief to Peggy to leave her as long as she had her brother.

The three Indians welcomed the thought

of returning to America. Owhera saddened when he found out that Ann would not go with them. He even became angry. Sir John, although secretly irritated by the Indian's presumption, and blaming his father, whose marriage had laid his daughters open to such unwelcome attention, persuaded him, however, that she would soon follow. The one bright spot in the parting, to Ann, was in seeing the last of Owhera, whose melancholy glance, sullen with disappointment, both frightened and insulted her.

At the last, an unexpected passenger sailed with them. This was the physician who had attended Sir John while he was ill from the effects of the fire. The two young men were constantly together, and Ann sometimes feared that, in Doctor O'Keefe's society, her brother drank and played cards far too much. Their new acquaintance came of good family, and possessed intellectual gifts of a high order. His heavy, coarse face, his bulky figure, repelled her. He was a universal favourite with men, and she appreciated while

she shrank from his keen wit, his high animal spirits, and his overpowering good nature. He, following a hasty impulse, boarded the ship just before it sailed, and her heart rebelled to see him standing between Sir John and Peggy, waving to her in boisterous spirits and shouting messages she did not catch.

It was impossible to ignore him, and she had to accept the fact as philosophically as she could that it was he, a comparative stranger, who answered with the greatest enthusiasm her fluttering handkerchief.

It was during these last few weeks that she had realised consciously for the first time that she and her sister were far from any common point of interest, or even sympathy.

All those solitary years in the lonely castle she had spent chiefly in study and reading. Now, as she was able to form contrasts, she began to appreciate that Madame Van Vrankin had been a woman of exceptional gifts and attainments. Wondering admiration coloured her lov-

ing memory, and she puzzled over the circumstances which, she believed, had made Madame her mother's companion. If she spoke of this to Peggy, she was met always by indifference. In those isolated days, the reading of Shakespeare had been Ann's chief delight. While she thus listened to the immortal harmonies of the poet's verse, Peggy heard the music of the pines in the wind; at the falling of the leaves she grew sad: Lo, they were the dying children of the forest! There was nothing vital in Ann's love for nature. What signified the stricken trees to her,—fit to serve a poet's fancy, "bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang."

Nature, calling with a mighty voice upon her child, was drawing Peggy back to her embrace.

But for Ann, the city pavements; the hurrying of feet; the lamplight shining on many faces. Here, in the midst of turmoil of affairs and human passions, here, she believed that love would come to her, here glory waited her!

Chapter XI

WITH the persistency that had characterised her determination to go to England, Ann now followed out her ambition to become an actress.

Thus one morning she might have been seen ascending the stoop of a chocolate-coloured brick house in a respectable part of the city. There were elaborate frescoes above the long, narrow windows, seemingly mere slits of light in the wall. She raised the knocker—a lion's head—and rapped. There was no response to her first timid knock, so she took heart and rapped more briskly. This time the door was opened by a rosy little maid with scrubbing-brush in hand and rolled-up sleeves. She directed Ann to pass through the parlours into the breakfast-room where Mr. and Mrs. Garrick received at this hour.

Left to make her way as best she might, she stumbled and but just saved herself from pitching headlong. The two ill-lighted parlours seemed interminably long, and inconvenient pieces of furniture thrust themselves out from dark corners into her path. Then she saw a crack of sunlight at a doorway, and the sudden chirp of a bird greeted her. She stood outside the door some moments, trying to summon the courage to enter. She heard the chink of china, a slight cough, a murmured word, followed by a ripple of laughter, and a retort in a woman's voice. Fearing if she stood longer she might overhear something of a private nature, she took heart and knocked. The morning-room was bright with sunshine, and gay with a row of potted geraniums on the window-ledge.

At a low oval table Mrs. Garrick sat making tea in a silver kettle.

Mr. Garrick, in a cinnamon brown dressing-gown, was reading the paper. As he turned it over he glanced up.

"Hey-day, what have we here?" he

cried, gaily. "My love, do my eyes deceive me? Is't or is't not the Goddess of Dawn?" He rose and flung aside his paper and went forward gracefully, bowed very low over Ann's hand, and kissed it. He then raised it, and, with a step as if they were advancing in the minuet, conducted her to his wife.

"My love," he said, "the Lady Ann Johnson does us great honour."

Ann curtsied.

Little Mrs. Garrick rose and kissed the girl's fresh cheek. "I am so glad you came," she said, "for Mr. Garrick has told me much of you, and yet it so happened that we never met. Shall we not have a cup of tea while we visit? Our breakfast, you know, is the rest of the world's luncheon. Let me take your shawl. And, pardon my mentioning it, but what a duck of a bonnet you have, Lady Ann! Dear, dear, when I think how much pink I used to wear, and, though I say it myself, it was most wondrous becoming. But that was when I was young."

“My love,” spoke Mr. Garrick, gallantly, “I like pink best on you to this day, though I must confess to a weakness for blue. But yet,” and he hummed :

“ ‘ With age thy beauty will decay,
Thy mind improve with years,
As when the blossoms fade away,
The ripening fruit appears ! ’ ”

Mrs. Garrick shook her head, and glanced drolly at Ann. “He wrote that to Peg Woffington,—pass me the tea-caddy, Davy dear,—and actually has the effrontery to repeat it to me.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Garrick, “I admit I did write those verses, but not the ones Sir Horace Walpole gave, though they were very good. I did not tell you,” turning to his wife, “how wounded I was by Sir Horace’s unkindness one night some months ago. I have never done an ill-natured thing to him, and yet he always has a fling for me. I suppose it is because I am an actor. Did you ever see him walk, Lady Johnson?” and, suiting the words to action, Mr. Garrick went

tripping and mincing across the room, and making a dainty pretence of taking snuff until Ann and Mrs. Garrick laughed heartily, the former not without compunction, for she was too tender-hearted really to enjoy seeing any one ridiculed.

“Come, the tea is steeped,” said Mrs. Garrick, and they all sat down. She rang the bell, and the little maid, with her sleeves now rolled down, brought in a tray holding a plate of hot muffins, a rasher of bacon, and a dish of stewed honey-blobs, as gooseberries were then called.

“Mr. Garrick,” said Ann, timidly, “I came to ask you if I might be your scholar.” She clasped her hands and turned her beautiful eyes entreatingly upon him. “Dear Mr. Garrick, I long to be a play-actress.”

“Superb!” he cried. “My love, did you observe those hands? That gesture! That glance!”

“To be a play-actress,” repeated Ann, “to hold multitudes breathless while you thrill with tragedy! Oh, to be a play-

actress !” She extended a muffin as though it were a sceptre.

Mrs. Garrick nodded approvingly across the table to her husband.

Ann relapsed into her usual tone, and modestly dropped her eyes. “I have never had any experience, sir, but I burn with genius and I long to try.”

“You shall,” he answered, solemnly. “Who would dare stifle such talent, such dramatic fire, such — you will permit me to say it in the presence of my wife — such beauty.” And he put his hand to his heart and inclined his head.

“Indeed, yes,” said little Mrs. Garrick, “and so much more genteel than that pretty hussy, Woffington.”

He reached over and patted his guest’s hand kindly. “When we have breakfasted you must recite for me. Do not be afraid. I shall be an attentive, not a severe, judge.”

While he sipped his third cup of tea, she rose to give the lines from Shakespeare he requested, and which happened to be a favourite passage with her. It was the

speech of Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* when she presented the flowers. Mrs. Garrick broke off a sprig of her scarlet geranium and gave it to their visitor to use in illustration of the words.

But the first syllable had not been spoken when Mr. Anthony Dashwood entered as she had.

"How d'ye do?" she said, nonchalantly, and seated herself hurriedly, most unpleasantly surprised, for she had hoped to keep her visit secret.

"Very well, I thank you," he replied. "Mrs. Garrick, I trust your health matches your looks. Then I am assured of your good spirits. A fair morning to you, Mr. Garrick. I just ran across my aunt at market. I often take a stroll through the market when the day's fresh, thinking to find a subject for my pen. When a thought comes I put it down at once. Here's a mere verse on cherries I sat down and dashed off at the apple-woman's stall this morning. But I will read it later." And he replaced the slip he had drawn from his pocket. "What

was it I started to say? Oh, I remember. My aunt said she was going home to take you driving, Lady Ann."

"Indeed!" remarked Ann, so coldly that his eyes twinkled, for he perceived his coming had filled her with wonder and annoyance.

"You like your tea all cream and sugar nearly, do you not?" said Mrs. Garrick, smiling at him. "I'm sure your poem must be quite ravishing. I'm so fond of cherries myself, indeed they are my favourite fruit. What was that little song we used to sing in duet about cherry lips, Davy?"

He gave her a fond glance. Her artless prattle always delighted him. "To business first, Mr. Dashwood. Let me have your lines," he cried, "then for a fresh brewing of tea and the cherries. I shall hear you better, Lady Johnson, when this is off my mind."

"Oh," cried Ann, in surprised delight, "you never told me you were studying for to be a play-actor."

"Well, I confess it," he explained. "I

feared lest you might mention the fact to my Aunt Betty. I prefer to keep my studying for the stage a secret till I am far enough advanced not to appear ridiculous." He did not add that he had been impelled to this course by his desire to shine maybe in her eyes, and, moreover, he did not consider himself wholly lacking in ability.

"That is how I felt, and that is why I was so sorry when you came in. I am pleased now, though," said Ann. "Do you know I am just a little, not very much, but just a little bit afraid of your Aunt Betty? She enjoys laughing so." She smiled cordially at him. From the first she had been much attracted by him, and now their like ambition and delicious consciousness of a mutual fear of Lady Betty strengthened the friendship so pleasantly commenced.

She noticed but did not grasp the significance of the smile that passed between the old actor and his wife. In the twenty and over years they had been married, they had never been separated a day, and

this atmosphere of happiness developed in them a peculiar tenderness and romantic sentiment toward young people whom they felt to be in love.

Mrs. Garrick picked another sprig of geranium and put it in the young man's buttonhole. "I cannot give you such posies as the poet had Perdita give, but you shall have this which all good housewives love for its cheerfulness."

Mr. Dashwood stole a look at Ann. Her lovely eyes met his in disheartening friendliness. He rose and paced off to the farther end of the breakfast-room, where he turned and faced his small and critical audience.

"How is my posture?" he asked, not one whit abashed. He waited, smiling, turning back the lace ruffles which fell over his wrists that he might make his gestures with greater freedom.

"Remember you are Macbeth, not Romeo," advised Mr. Garrick, severely.

Mr. Dashwood drew his face down in a fearful scowl.

"Oh, oh!" shrieked little Mrs. Gar-

rick, in an ecstasy of delight, "you do not have to make faces at us, sir!"

He relapsed into a broad grin. He did not feel at all foolish, and he thoroughly enjoyed the merriment.

The old actor, frowning, tapped sharply on the table with his teaspoon. "Come, come, let us have the lines. Come, 'We have scotched the snake, not killed it.' Go on, sir. Above all, remember you are Macbeth."

He rose and leant over the back of his chair. His wonderful eyes, burning with intensity, followed the speaker's every gesture and expression. Here was no longer the courteous host, but a great tragedian jealous for his art. A thrill of nervous fear passed over Ann. She felt for Dashwood, and was apprehensive lest he should not acquit himself well. But his reading was even worse than she could have supposed. Her own artistic sense was shocked.

As the speech drew to a finish, Mr. Garrick flung aside the chair, on which he had been leaning, in a seeming rage.



"HE GAVE THE LINES AS ONLY HE COULD GIVE
THEM."

“Who taught you to stalk and paw and to mouth your words? Not I! Yaw, whaw, maw! Better be with the dead, indeed, than so to confound my teaching. Better be with the dead? Wee, wee, wee. Did I hear a mouse squeak? No, sir, I never taught you thus.” And then, to their relief, the actor laughed heartily.

“Dear Mr. Dashwood,” he continued with genuine sweetness and reproach, “what am I going to do with you? Ah, I see your heart is not in this, else you were a man of too fine susceptibilities to make Macbeth so mouth those lines. They should not be so loudly spoken, but quietly and with tears in the voice. I told you but a few gestures as your own emotion would dictate. ’Tis to despair, not to rant! Come, let us see what we can do.”

Then standing by the little breakfast-table, in his cinnamon dressing-gown, he gave the lines as only he could give them. His face became dejected, wan, the eyes staring and far-away, as though viewing the approach of a nameless horror. When

he came to the last speech of the selection, his voice broke with infinite longing.

“ ‘ Better be with the dead,
Whom we to gain our peace have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. . . . Duncan is in his grave.
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well ;
Treason has done its worse ; nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him farther.’ ”

Lo, as the actor spoke, the little room lost its cheer ; the brightness had gone from the flooding sunshine ; the singing of the birds was meaningless.

Mrs. Garrick, whose emotions were played upon as a harp by the wind, sat with folded hands, her wistful eyes, that had won her the name of “ The Violette ” and still retained their beauty, fixed on her Davy's face.

Ann was thinking of Madame, Madame, who slept well after life's fitful fever !

And then the strain was broken as the actor spoke in his ordinary voice : “ There, Mr. Dashwood, and when you try that

speech again, give it more passion and less mouth."

The young man crossed over and laid his hand affectionately on the old actor's shoulder, looking down on him with frankest admiration in his pleasant face. "Sir," he said, "after seeing you as I did just now, I should be most presumptuous to continue my study for the stage. I do but wonder that I ever dared begin."

Mr. Garrick, always deeply touched by honest praise and always hungry for it, protested generously: "One star differeth from another in glory, and you —"

"I know what you are going to say," interrupted the other, laughing, "that I am a poet, and there again one star differeth in glory! But back to my Lady Muse I go, nevertheless, though she ever flout me."

Chapter XII

THREE years passed, and in that time Ann grew to know much that was best, wisest, and wittiest in a society which was also coarse and calculating. The first year she lived with Lady Betty Fitzhugh, who, once she realised that not only did Ann's desires centre in the stage, but that she had talent as well, sympathised genuinely with her ambition and proved a most helpful friend.

Sir William Johnson's consent that his daughter should study for the stage was easily obtained. The fact that his old friend took his daughter under her care relieved his mind of all anxiety, and he trusted to her judgment. Moreover, he knew Garrick to be a gentleman by birth and training, and a member of the king's household. He had met the actor while on a visit to England some years ago, and

had both admired his art and sympathised with the courage and ambition by which Garrick had won his high position. He, who had been so entirely the master of his own fortune, accorded an immense respect to the men whom he felt, like himself, had won their spurs unaided. He did not perceive, however, that this longing for success was repeated in Ann, and that it was she, rather than John, in whom was implanted his own ambitious spirit and determined will.

All that happy spring and summer Ann studied with Mr. Garrick. These were, in a measure, her happiest days. In the fullness of her heart, she wrote many letters home, to receive but brief and long delayed replies from Peggy and John, and from her father a short letter at regular intervals, enclosing a liberal allowance. But the warmth of her own feeling was so genuine, and her content in her studies so supreme, that she never quite appreciated how indifferent and self-absorbed her family was. She heard several times from Mr. Claus, who had entered his Majesty's

service, and, owing to courageous conduct in the border wars, been promoted to a captaincy. His letters were always delightful, full of a direct simplicity, refreshing by contrast to the affectations held by so many of the young men she met in London. She anticipated his letters eagerly, not much for the sake of the writer, but chiefly because he told her many details of the life at Johnson Hall where he now lived as an *aide* to her father. A few words would conjure up a vivid picture of Peggy or her father. He hinted at a love-affair of Sir John's with a New York belle. The most important influence his letters had upon her lay probably in the fact that they served to keep fresh in her heart the love of her country; for Claus, who was always keenly interested in public affairs, quite unconsciously wrote much of them. Any temptation he had to write to her of his love faded on receiving her answers, so prompt and cordial, so impersonally friendly, that he felt her heart to be wholly in her work. If this were his grief, it was at the same time his

consolation, for it convinced him that she cared for no one. But in spite of this assurance, there were nights when the accomplished duties of the day left him free to be the prey of jealous fear lest another should win her in the time it would take him to make his fortune. At such hours of torturing thought, he would rise and go for a long walk in the forest, as familiar to his trained senses by night as by day. There in the mighty woods, that his hunter's heart so loved, the world was shut out. He felt that a great solitude closed him around, and that the only other person existing within that vast and magic space was Ann, and she, not as one in the body, but spiritually. She seemed to him then, not a separate person, but his very soul. When writing to her, his thought would revert to the mood of exaltation, and he would be filled with wonder that he could write of the commonplaces of life. Often he was content to think of her as joyous in her work, which he prayed Heaven might absorb her until that

happy time for him to win her should ripen.

The night of Ann's first appearance marked a brilliant house. She made her début as Juliet on the New Year's Eve of her second winter abroad. Not only had her reputation as a beauty spread wide, but she had that indescribable air of fashion that made a strong appeal to worldly people. She was of rank herself, and she had, moreover, the patronage of royalty, for George III., who was far from being an anchorite or recluse, loved the theatre, and did much to promote its advancement.

Mr. Garrick, anxious that she should shine rather than himself, selected *Romeo and Juliet*, the play in which he was at his worst, but in which he was confident his beloved scholar would show to the greatest advantage. He, the jealous lover of Shakespeare, who had brushed from *Macbeth* and *Lear* the absurdities that former actors had added to these plays now himself contributed a last scene to *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Juliet awakened

in the tomb and there was a long and affecting scene between the lovers. Garrick's art was great. He had so loved Shakespeare; the eternal harmonies of the poet's verse so rang in his mind that he wrote the final tragedy in an inspired mood that touched of the great dramatist himself. Historically, he had some grounds for this addition, as, in the original tale by Bandello, Juliet awakens in the tomb.

The house was filled to standing-room. Persons of quality occupied even the footmen's gallery. The Christmas greens and scarlet berries still adorned the pillars and railings. An unusual number of wax candles was employed, and the soft and brilliant light was entrancing. Over the stage was a large cluster so arranged that the light might seem to fall as from the sun. The house was in an uproar. Quiet would fall only when the curtain rose.

Lady Betty, gorgeous in a new gown, fanned herself or took snuff with assumed indifference. She was in reality anxious

that Ann should acquit herself with glory, and feared stage-fright for so sensitive a nature. She felt that her own nerves would be at a tension until the curtain should fall on the final scene, and she turned sharply on her nephew as she happened to hear him sigh. "Am I not in enough of a fidget, Tony, without your making me more so by your melancholy ways, drat 'em! Are you in love again?"

He laughed. "'Tis my digestion only, Aunt Betty, and then, too, I sighed to think on the young lovers that will die to-night, though it be but on the stage."

Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was Lady Fitzhugh's guest for the evening, laughed hugely.

"They're not so young," he said, rolling and heaving in his chair; "at least our Romeo to-night has some wrinkles the paint won't hide to those of us who know his age."

"Tut, tut, you old gossip!" said Lady Betty, who stood in no awe of the doctor. "I'll admit Garrick, when young, made a handsomer Romeo than he's likely to

make to-night. But what kind of a Romeo could you ever have made? Ha, ha! my dear doctor."

He glowered at her. "I make no pretensions, madam," he cried, pounding on the floor with his cane. "I'm what I am, a lexicographer, a harmless drudge. I'm no actor, to take on this fellow's mincing gait, or that one's voice, or another's impish face."

He flounced around in his chair and turned his back squarely on her.

Lady Betty tittered and put up her glass to look at the audience.

Doctor Johnson felt the good humour in which he had come vanish. He liked Ann, but did not particularly admire her; indeed, had gone so far as openly to profess at dinner, at the coffee-house that evening, his preference for several other actresses of heartier if coarser wit, and a more buxom style of beauty. However, in honour of the occasion, he put on a scarlet coat trimmed with gold lace, which he had worn first on the opening night of a play he had written. Its failure to

strike the popular note he always attributed to Mr. Garrick's poor acting. He had never quite forgiven his friend, who writhed under the injustice.

In those days actors and actresses did not costume themselves according to the period of which a play was written, but dressed in the latest London fashion. Ann wore the same dress throughout the play; her hair was caught up in ringlets on her head and her satin skirt swept out magnificently over the hoops she wore.

Garrick at times overdid his part. He who caused his audience to shudder at Richard, and drew tears from all in the anguished character of Lear, did not escape ridicule as Romeo.

But she, all sweetness, all unfolding beauty and freshness, made her way to every heart. In the breasts of those from whom first love had long since taken wing her voice was as the voice of their lost youth, and woke in them the tender, eternal romance.

Ah, how little it mattered to those so moved that the gallant mask of Romeo

failed to hide the old actor's pathetically intense and wrinkled face ; that he showed a lamentable lack of his usual fine feeling in the balcony scene, and came creeping in on tiptoes instead of entering with the watchful, but, on the whole, free and daring step of a youthful lover.

What did this matter to an audience that, single-eyed, saw only a Juliet of exquisite beauty, standing on a vine-wreathed balcony, her tender face lifted in the moonlight, so artfully suggested by concealed green-shaded candles ; the folds of her silver embroidered satin gown gleaming no whiter than her matchless arms ; her voice so thrilling-sweet promising —

“ This bud of love by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet ” ?

The daring ending of the play that Garrick had introduced was more successful than he could have hoped. The people melted into tears, then broke into loud huzzas.

Old Doctor Johnson was growling his

approval and wiping his eyes, and when the curtain fell went rumbling off to the greenroom, his good nature restored, to congratulate his old friend Davy on his new actress.

Once only during the evening had Ann been conscious of any spectator other than those in Lady Betty's box. This was a heavy, plain-featured young man whose gaze had magnetically attracted her own. He looked familiar to her. She glanced away, puzzled to place him. Then suddenly she knew. He was Doctor O'Keefe. She wondered when he had returned from America, and why he had not been to see her.

Doctor O'Keefe, noting Lady Betty, went over to see her between acts, and received a cordial invitation to the supper she was to give in Ann's honour after the play. Sir John had once brought him to call on her and she remembered his wit and clever stories.

"I'm fond of Tony, but he's a trifle depressing to a woman of my temperament," she had said that afternoon, in

semi-apology for the screams of merriment the Irishman drew from her. She greeted him with anticipation of more jovial times, and regretted that, for the present, her interest in the evening's performance prevented her gossiping with him of his visit abroad.

He, on his part, accepted her invitation eagerly. Always at his best in the society of men, he had never been at ease in Ann's company, and considered her a delicate creature, lacking in spirit and humour, much preferring Lady Betty. But to-night her beauty and her success carried him by storm, and he was all impatience till the play should end, that he might meet her again. His recent visit to the Colonies, though short, had been most pleasant, and now the remembrance of it flung a glamour over any American association.

The Garricks, Doctor Johnson, the members of the troupe taking part on the stage that evening, Mr. Dashwood, Doctor O'Keefe, their hostess, and Ann all sat down to the table together. The

Irishman, whose spirits rose to the occasion and to the good wine, vied with Mr. Garrick in being the life of the party.

Ann, pale and wearied, a trifle silent, ceased to attract him, and his sudden fancy fled. And she was equally disappointed in him in a different way, for he had little to say of his visit in her father's home. His time there had been spent chiefly in hunting, and then he had gone to visit new acquaintances in Albany.

He had, however, taken a warm liking to Captain Claus, and spoke of him with enthusiasm. Sir William and he were, unfortunately, too much alike in temperaments. Both being hot-tempered Irishmen, they had fallen out, so that the physician left the Hall in high dudgeon. But once out of sight, both men had as quickly forgotten their wrath, and thought of each other kindly.

The night of that initial performance Ann went to bed with a heavy heart. She felt drained of all emotion, and was, indeed, too wearied to weep. As she lay in bed, watching the bars of moonlight

across the curtains at the window, a sense of dreariness, of desolation more than she had ever known before, stole over her spirit. Was not her success all she had hoped or even dreamed? Yes, she told herself, but with the success came the knowledge of how little it meant. Now, she knew how slight a thing was fame. It was for this, then, that she had studied so ambitiously, this mere stage-scene, love that was but acting, applause that came from strangers! The first disillusion had come when she saw the old actor come creeping on tiptoes in the balcony scene. The dreaming was best and more real. The reality was a mockery. Better the old days in the castle. Then was Romeo her lover; then was she Juliet.

She went over the incidents of the evening, remembering, last of all, Mr. Garrick's happy face. His own star was declining, but he found comfort in the star that was rising with such pale and tremulous brilliancy to take his place. She resolved that she, his scholar, would be faithful to his teachings. When she

awoke in the morning it was with a heart still heavy, but her sorrow she could not have named.

The play was a marvellous success. It drew crowded houses for nineteen nights. Then there appeared a skit in the paper ridiculing Garrick as Romeo. Months after, Ann learned that the actor, morbidly fearful of ridicule, had written the article himself, hoping thus to disarm bitterer criticism.

Chapter XIII

THE next two years brought few changes. She heard of Sir John's marriage to the New York beauty of whom Captain Claus had written her. Lady Betty went abroad, and Ann went to live with the Garricks. They gave the second floor of their house to her, and treated her with all the loving indulgence they would have accorded a daughter. Mr. Garrick was beginning to brood over the time, now so near, when his age would make it necessary for him to leave the stage, after nearly forty years of service. He was often melancholy, and felt that without him the lofty tone he had given to the theatre would pass.

"If I had only the time left me to train others as I have you, Ann!" he would sigh. His anxiety revealed itself pathetically in a class of children he formed, and

taught, free of any remuneration, three days in the week. Many a morning, in the sunshiny little breakfast-room, he sat in his dressing-gown with the children drawn in a circle around him while he read aloud from Shakespeare, or heard them recite the passages he had taught to them. And sweet Mrs. Garrick, who was disappointed in never having had any children of her own, would slip into the room and press a sweetmeat into the hand of each child. Often Ann would join that charmed circle of budding talent, and her gentleness and beauty, united to her reputation, would cast a spell over the reverent and awe-struck children, who saw in her all that they might ever hope to be. Several were street urchins whom Mr. Garrick was convinced had unusual promise of ability, and Ann made him an allowance for their support out of the abundance she had, both from her father and her profession. Mr. Dashwood, who had taken to writing plays, wrote a comedy for the children, and this was given one afternoon in Drury Lane Theatre with

much success, the funds being given to the little actors and actresses on that occasion. Ann and Mrs. Garrick had the best of sport in costuming the children, and, when finished, gazed with pride on their handiwork. There was one roguish orange-girl, of about fifteen, whose genius was undisputed by all who saw her act, and to her development Mr. Garrick gave much attention.

Ann kept up many numerous small charities, of which few knew anything save the recipient and herself. There were several old women who would call habitually on her at the greenroom, and always go away happy with a little present of money for such delicacies as tea and snuff.

She, herself, had changed, but in a subtle way hard to define. Some touch of sadness had crept into her nature. The womanhood into which she was passing was less vigorous than her girlhood had promised. The change from the long, solitary years, in which she knew only Madame and Peggy, to the midst of the busy world, had come too suddenly,

and now its effect was beginning to show. The dreaming child still lived in her, and was continually wounded and astonished. She mingled little with her fellows in her profession, meeting them chiefly in the play and at the rehearsals. It was not that she held herself aloof from them in any way, but, on the contrary, it was they who found her gentle, reserved nature most uncongenial. They treated her cordially and asked her for loans that were never repaid, but soon fell out of the habit of inviting her to join them in their informal suppers. Her success was great, but her sweetness disarmed all envy, and many were the small kindnesses the women in her company showed her. The society of the court stood open to her, not only for her own sake, but also for her father's. George III. felt that Sir William Johnson was his most loyal as well as one of his most powerful subjects in America, where the trouble that had been brewing for so long seemed to be increasing.

Doctor O'Keefe allied himself with that body of men who appreciated the fact

that the Colonies were being unjustly taxed to meet home expenses, and prophesied the misfortune that would be sure to follow, did the king persist in his short-sighted policy.

Confident that Ann would sympathise in these views, the enthusiastic young physician felt his capricious fancy for her return. He was in the mood to have the very fact that she was an American appeal to his imagination. He had not been near her for months, and she was surprised when he called one afternoon, and at first feared he had happened to hear ill news from America, but soon found that he sought her for the sake of pouring out his opinions and predictions. He insisted that she was the beautiful embodiment of his ideal of American liberty.

This view of herself displeased her, and she protested vainly her belief that the Colonies should above all be faithful to the mother country. He put his own interpretation upon her words, and treated her always as a secret sympathiser with the rebellion rising in her country.

She felt, although she could not have defined it, a lurking insincerity in him that made her welcome Mr. Dashwood, whose conservatism and frankness inspired her confidence. She was sure that the physician's boisterous good spirits and wit masked a real self-seeking, that he loved to be on the conspicuous side, and enjoyed the distinction accorded his extreme and loudly expressed political views. The lavish hospitality that the Americans had shown him during his brief visit, and the exaggerated tales of their wealth that were now being told, began to affect his imagination, and to appeal to his adventurous spirit, as well as to colour his judgment.

While in this condition of mind he sought Ann one afternoon, and made to her the extraordinary proposal that she should marry him and accompany him at once to America. At the time, the two happened to be sitting in the tiny, but pretentious, garden that made the back yard of the Garricks' home. Doctor O'Keefe made a remarkable speech, in

which he poured forth his love, his political views, his plans for his American life, and took for granted their immediate marriage.

She gasped for breath, and for a moment could only stare at him.

"Say when, Lady Johnson," he cried, dropping to his knees on the pebbled walk, and placing her hand to his breast; "my heart but beats for you. The first time I saw you I knew you would be mine. Ha, my pretty one! Do not turn away your eyes. I know you love. 'Tis no time for a coy mood."

She struggled to free her hand, that she might rise from the bench and leave him.

"Canst feel? Every heart throb is for you," he cried.

"I do not care anything about your heart," she said, indignantly. "I wish you to let me go. You have no right to say I love you." She managed to wrench her hand free, and pushed him from her.

He rose slowly, staring stupidly at her. For once his ready wit deserted him. Then it began to dawn on him that her

flashing eyes and scornful face expressed the opposite of love. His heavy face crimsoned.

“So, madam,” he said, sneering, “I have been used as a catspaw, a rival, to bring Tony Dashwood to terms. I heard how he held off, though content to dangle. He read your confounded coquettish airs better than I. But I think you’ll give me a kiss, hey?”

Ann had risen. She was more indignant than frightened.

But she had no desire to bandy words with him, far less to have him come near her. He took a step forward, and it was the signal for immediate flight on her side. She gathered up her skirts, slipped by him, and sped down the path to the house. Once within, she paused to get her breath, and then went up-stairs to her room. One of its windows overlooked the garden, and she stood concealed behind the curtain, waiting nervously to see Doctor O’Keefe leave. He stood staring at the house as if he could not believe his scornful lady-love had vanished for good.

He soon renounced the hope of seeing her again, evidently, for he stooped to rub his knee and to pick up his hat; then, his face still red and muttering to himself, he passed out of the garden. A moment later she heard the iron gate in the front yard slammed to, and was relieved to know that he had gone.

She drew aside the curtain and sat down at the window. The garden looked temptingly fresh and green, but she was afraid to go down again, thinking he might return. So she sat dreaming at her window idly, wishing Mr. Dashwood might call. Her unwelcome suitor's sneer had not troubled her. She knew too well the devotion the other gave her, and now, for the first time in their acquaintance, she felt she was fond almost to the point of loving him: The late afternoon sun shone bright on the leaves. The golden green shimmer brought back to mind that spring day when she had ventured forth alone for the first time from the castle. How long, how very long ago it seemed! Was it not a dream? She saw the arching branches

of that spring forest, with its mist of budding green, the pale blue sky shining through. Again in fancy she followed the winding path; the little fawn came and nibbled the tender grass from her hand; later she met Mr. Claus coming on horseback, encountered once more his dazed and wistful look, felt her own lids flutter and droop.

In contrast to the brutal tone of Doctor O'Keefe, whose words still rang in her ears, she heard like remembered music the voice of her first lover.

She looked into a London garden no longer: she saw deep into a forest of the New World, and there her lover stood. She met his eyes bright with pain and love across the abyss of the years of absence, and, as her soul awoke and thus gazed, a shudder passed through her frame, and she put her hands over her face with a sobbing cry.

It was not Dashwood nor the man who had just left her that she loved. She went to her desk and drew out a packet of letters. She had saved all that Claus had written



"SHE FASTENED THE LAST LETTER IN THE FRONT
OF HER DRESS."

to her. She returned to her seat at the window, and read them anew and in order. As she read, fresh meanings flashed from the lines. Her face grew rosy with happiness, her breath came quickly, her eyes shone. How she was always in his thoughts, always! She read on and on.

“He loves me!” she cried. She had a terrible thought. What if he had not loved her! For it seemed to her now as if she always had and always would love him, whether or not he had cared for her.

The tears flowed down her face. She knelt in front of the chair in which she had been sitting, and gathered the letters to her bosom.

She heard the voice of Mrs. Garrick calling her to come down-stairs, and knew that the old couple were lonely and wanted her with them.

She rose and went to the door. “I will come down in a moment,” she answered, joyously.

How was the world transformed! How wonderful the life that coursed through her veins! She fastened the last letter in

the front of her dress. She washed her tear-stained face, and plucked a red rose from the vine at the window and put it in her hair. Her room was growing dark and she lighted the candles on her bureau. Was the luminous reflection in the mirror really hers, that face so beautiful with happiness, her own?

Before going down-stairs, she went once more to the window and looked out at the garden, dim in the twilight. A single star shone palely. She found herself wishing for the night to come, that, lying alone in the darkness, she might picture him to herself over and over again. What flashes of endearment, what echoes of lovers' talk kept rising to her lips!

“This bud of love by summer's ripening breath
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.”

And she trembled at the thought.

Chapter XIV

SEVERAL mornings later the post brought her a letter from her father. She received it at the door as she was starting to the market for Mrs. Garrick. The morning was fresh and lovely. The early shadows stretched across the street, and the sidewalks were wet with the dew. The air was already warmed by the sun. She opened her letter and read it as she walked along. Back of her came the Garricks' little servant with the market-basket.

Sir William's letter was short. He mentioned the discontent rife in the Colonies briefly, but in such a manner as to convey his deep perplexity and his anxiety for the outcome. He added that he hoped to see her in London in the near future, but could not tell her just when to expect him. His going would depend

upon how soon he could get his affairs into shape, so that he could entrust them into the hands of his son and Captain Claus. The letter was a sombre one, and she felt that he feared the worst for his country. When he came she would beg him to let her return home with him.

“‘To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,’” hummed a merry voice close by.

She turned smiling, and found Mr. Dashwood at her side.

“‘Tis a charming morning, sir,” said she. “I hope I see you well. But I’m not going to market to buy a fat pig. I’m going to the flower and vegetable stalls, and I may pick out a chicken for mincing.”

“Haven’t you forgotten something?” he asked.

She was puzzled by his semi-reproachful air; then, as she caught sight of a roll of manuscript tied by a bit of ribbon in his hand, blushed guiltily.

He shook his finger at her. “Ah, I see you yielded to the temptation to put off the evil hour.”

“Indeed, no,” she cried. “I did forget, but I should have recalled the appointment we had soon, and been very sorry to have missed you —”

“And when you got home again you would have written me a note and told me as you have done before,” he put in, good-naturedly.

“Please don’t reproach me,” she begged, smiling, “you know what faith I have in your work. We’ll go to market now and then home again to the garden, and you shall read me your new scene. Mr. Garrick thinks you will write a play of note some day.”

“Some day!” he echoed. “I love writing for its own sake surely, for my reward is never in the present! And I think I must love love for its own sake, too, for you give me no hope, Ann. But, there, forgive me. I was not to speak of that again, was I? Whom was your letter from? I hope you had good news.”

“It was from my father,” she answered. “He is coming to London soon, that is, as soon as he can arrange his affairs, for I

fear we may be going to have trouble with the Colonies, after all." Her own words caused her a sudden pang, lest Mr. Claus might be wounded or killed should war ensue.

"I do not wonder that you are concerned," said her companion, sympathetically observing her expression, "but I am not surprised to hear what your father has written. I am decidedly in sympathy with the Americans. We have treated them shamefully. Did you happen to see my verses in the morning paper? No? 'Twas a tribute to their independence."

"Why, it was only last week that you were all against us," she cried. "Then you would have it that we Americans were all wrong, and have none of my assertion that there was right on our side."

"We — our — us —" he echoed, loving to tease her, "I shall begin to think Doctor O'Keefe is right and that we have a pretty rebel on our stage. We Americans! We'll have you refusing to drink tea next. This is terrible."

"I am at least consistent," she retorted,

with spirit, "and you know I'm 'no rebel. But you, sir, are of a different opinion every day."

"I have the right to change my mind," he answered.

"Fie on you," she cried, merrily, "to hide behind a woman's reason!"

But he only laughed. "Better than no reason at all," he said.

"If you but knew how Doctor O'Keefe insulted me the other afternoon, you would never mention his name to me again," said she.

"Insulted you!" he cried; "you are mistaken. You must be. O'Keefe is an impulsive fellow, but, no, he would not be discourteous."

"He was very impertinent. He asked me to marry him," she replied.

"He meant that to be flattering, I'm sure. Now, Aunt Betty would think you missed the chance of your life."

"But I haven't told you the worst," she cried; "he accused me of loving him."

They both laughed heartily at this.

"To return to the subject of the Colo-

nies," spoke Mr. Dashwood, seriously, "did your father write what the attitude of the Indians is?"

"I don't think so," answered Ann, "but I will just look at his letter again and see. I read it over so hastily." She scanned the two written pages. "No, he writes nothing of them, but of course they will take his views. I am going home with him when he comes, and then I will write and tell you all the little things which are so interesting and which most people leave out of their letters."

Her companion paled. "Then you think of going home with him. We shall miss you." He could not say more. He had long since resigned himself to the hopelessness of winning her love, and become content with her friendship. His heart grew desolate. He struggled to keep all emotion out of his voice, for he had no desire to cloud her bright mood. Not for a long time had she seemed so happy. He felt it could not be her father's coming alone that had made her so joyous, and he was deeply touched by

her gentle and radiant expression, which carried him back to the days of their first acquaintance. He had known her wistful so many times that her present happiness was almost pathetic to him. It seemed such a tremulous kind of joy. As he walked by her side he puzzled over this change.

He gained no clue to it from their conversation, however, for Ann hugged her secret to her heart and allowed no one to guess.

The bloom of the morning freshness lay on the market. Gentlefolk and vendors mingled freely, and many a sharp bargain was driven. The fruit and flower stalls were particularly choice this day, and Mr. Dashwood, remembering Mrs. Garrick's favourite fruit, bought a box of blackheart cherries for her and placed it in the little maid's basket.

"I know how many there are," he warned the small servant, "and I shall ask her if they were all there, so you needn't eat any." He gave her a bag of ordinary sweetmeats, however, so she

would not think his speech had been too severe.

He bought an enormous nosegay for Ann. It had a paper frilling around it; in the centre was a wee, but fragrant, pink moss-rose circled around by even rows of geraniums, pansies, and mignonette.

As they came out from the stall, she saw Doctor O'Keefe, with a dashing widow on his arm, bearing down upon them. There was no way to escape.

"Give me your arm, Tony," she whispered.

"'Tis a fine day," said the Irishman, with marked pleasantness of manner.

"Oh, good morning, is't you, Doctor O'Keefe?" answered Ann, in pretended surprise.

"'Tis no other than your little O'Keefe," he rejoined, cordially. "I've a suspicion, ma'am, that you saw me then out o' the tail of your eye, but there, I'll not quarrel with you. Mr. Dashwood, your poem in this morning's paper was the expression of a noble heart. It fired my blood."

"Thank you," answered Mr. Dash-

wood, extremely pleased by the praise. "May I be so presuming as to enquire if you heard any other comments?"

"Several, and all favourable," replied Doctor O'Keefe, forcibly.

Ann was staring at him in astonishment. No one would have guessed from his affable manner the unpleasant scene that recently took place between them. She knew his companion by sight, a showy, handsome woman.

"Lady Johnson," he continued, "allow me to make you acquainted with the future Mrs. O'Keefe. Next week we are to be married and set sail for America."

Ann made a vain attempt to conceal her surprise, and offered her congratulations, "America is a beautiful country and I am sure you will be happy there," she ended.

"Oh, to be sure, ma'am, you're from America," said the lady; "they tell me the women there have wondrous natural complexions. Do tell me, is it true?"

"Most beautiful, madam," put in Mr. Dashwood, "if I may judge by one

fair example," and he bowed low to his companion.

"Come, my jewel, we must be off," cried Doctor O'Keefe, drawing his lady's hand through his arm and bestowing a fond pat upon her plump fingers.

"Good-bye, and good luck go with you," cried Mr. Dashwood, heartily.

"Good-bye, and may you find all happiness," cried Ann, pressing her bouquet into the lady's arms.

They watched the two out of sight, and that was the last she ever saw of her eccentric suitor. He fought in the Revolution on the side of the Colonists, and met his death bravely on the field.

Ann and her companion sauntered on, chatting and laughing over the incident. Beneath this light conversation, her heart held a sacred and hushed emotion. There were moments when the busy market seemed an unreal show, when the young man's voice fell unheeded on her ears. Her soul took flight to the far-away castle, and waited there the coming of her lover, as he had come during the sad days

that followed Madame Van Vrankin's death.

Quite unexpectedly, they came across Doctor Johnson eating soup in the stall of an old vegetable woman, who always kept a bit of broth on hand for her customers.

Ann went in and touched him on the shoulder, to attract his attention.

He growled and shrugged his shoulder, but did not look up to see who had touched him, not desiring to be interrupted in his meal.

"You must pardon me, Doctor Johnson," she said, amused at his ill-humour, "but I happen to know that Mr. Garrick wished to see you this morning, and sent early to see if he could find you at your room."

"I hope he won't find me till I'm done my breakfast," he retorted. "When I eat, I eat! When I talk, I talk, and don't confuse the two! You are looking well, Lady Johnson," glancing up. "Good morning, sir," to Mr. Dashwood. He turned his attention once more to

the soup, swallowing spoonfuls of it with grunts of satisfaction. Some drops trickled down his chin upon his clothes.

Ann's fastidiousness was offended by this sight, and she was for going on, but Mr. Dashwood lingered.

"Have you read my poem in this morning's post, Doctor Johnson?" he asked.

"What, sir? No, sir," from the depths of the soup-bowl, "I saw your poem, sir, but I did not read it. Are you too fine to use good plain English prose to express your meaning? I'll read no such jingle, not I!"

"My subject was not an ordinary one," replied Mr. Dashwood; "it carried me on and on into the inspired realms of poetry. While I am aware that you do not admire the Americans, I thought my poem, if you had read it, might have influenced you to kindlier feeling. I praised their magnificent independence, and —"

"No, sir," thundered Doctor Johnson, pounding on the counter with his fist, "I did not read it. Your verses, being verse,

would not tempt me, anyway, and when it comes to writing a poem in praise of a race of convicts — ”

“ Doctor Johnson,” interrupted Ann, quivering with indignation, “ I am an American ! ”

“ So much the more credit to your powers of discretion, madam, in fleeing so abominable a country. Which way did you say Davy went ? ” He seized his cane, and, gathering himself up like a bear, turned to go. The light fell upon his rude, scarred face and blinking eyes.

She saw that his eyes were swollen from recent weeping, and straightway forgot her anger with him. “ I am afraid you will not find him,” she said, “ for he told me he would be on the wing all day, and has by now, I fancy, started for the country, where he was to take lunch with some friends. He’ll be home for supper. Can’t you come and take tea with us ? We’re to have minced chicken and waffles and, perhaps, tipsy oranges.”

“ I will come with pleasure,” he answered. “ Remember me to Mrs. Gar-

rick. I hope she's over those twinges of rheumatism in her knees." He shook his cane at Mr. Dashwood. "As for you, sir, I consider you a traitor, sir. Never speak to me again. You hear, sir?"

He marched off, shaking his head.

"Come," said Ann, turning Mr. Dashwood playfully around by his sleeve, "come and help me to pick out two more chickens for mincing, and the oranges."

Chapter XV

WHEN at last Sir William arrived, Ann's happiness was great. She found him unchanged, save that his dark face had taken on a deeper tinge of melancholy. He greeted her fondly as in the old days, pinched her cheek, and called her Nancy. But soon this affectionate mood wore away, and was replaced by a sort of impersonal kindness which made her realise how his love for his children was centred in John, of whom he spoke often. So silent had he become that his lovely daughter, too, grew silent in his company, and often, when walking at his side upon the street, she had a half-sad, half-humourous consciousness of certain Indian characteristics he had developed. At times she even had the curious fancy that they did not belong to the same race, and that she was in the society of a Mo-

hawk chieftain in civilian's dress. This thought so amused her by its absurdity that she laughed aloud once or twice, but her merriment fell unheeded by him. He had acquired the erect carriage of the People of the Long House; more than ever was stamped upon him their unbending dignity and habit of silence.

Still, in answer to her persistent and eager questions, he told her of Peggy and of John, and the latter's marriage to a desirable and handsome wife. No one lived in the castle now, and it was used only for the storing of merchandise employed in bartering with the Indians.

She longed to hear him speak of Mr. Claus, but lacked the courage to mention him herself, and so she heard his name spoken only casually and at rare intervals. This slight mention, however, was sufficient to cause her heart to beat violently and fill her with terror lest she should betray the secret love that filled her waking thought and coloured her dreams at night.

Sir William remained several months, staying at a tavern not far from the Garricks' home. He had several audiences with George III., and Ann noticed that after each of these occasions he sought her, more depressed than ever.

Lady Betty, hearing of his arrival, came hurrying home from France, and opened her house in London.

"I came home purely on your account, William," she said; "dear Lud, to think we're all that are left! Now, tell me, how did you leave John and Peggy? How like that child is to you in disposition! Give Ann another slice of the roast. I declare the Garricks are so close that I believe they half starve her. I dined with them once myself. Perfect bird's food."

The three were at dinner at her home.

Sir William rose, the better to carve the roast skilfully. "My dear Betty," he remarked, "you always were an inaccurate speaker. My daughter Peggy is about as much like me as this dish of gravy."

"Peggy is said to be like her mother,"

put in Ann, gently, "but John is like his father."

"Still blessed with a finer wit than I," added Sir William. "All my hopes are in my son, Betty."

"Don't say that again, William," she retorted; "you make me feel like a cat with my fur rubbed the wrong way. Ann's little finger is worth that idle fellow's whole body. Her name is in every one's mouth. What has he done?"

Ann laughed. "You see what a champion I have, father. But nothing I could ever do could compare with what John did when the White Swan burned."

"What was that, Nancy?" he asked.

So she told him of Peggy's danger and how heroically she was rescued.

This incident put him in the best of spirits, and he talked about it for the rest of the meal.

Lady Betty had become stouter and more rheumatic. She took her old friend's arm, and leant heavily on her cane as well, going down the hall to the drawing-room after dinner.

Ann was not to play that night, and the three settled down for a cosy evening.

Mr. Dashwood, who had been out to dinner, drifted in later, and the younger people listened to the conversation of the other two.

Then they went over to the harpsichord and practised a duet together. The young man was in the happiest of humours. His last play had been refused by Mr. Garrick, but he had found a rival manager who was willing to bring it out and introduce a new actor in it.

"I went up to tell Mr. Garrick before coming here," he said, "and it worried him. He felt that if the other manager had accepted it there must be some merit in my work, after all."

"Poor Mr. Garrick," said Ann, "you must not blame him nor think he hasn't faith in you. It is only that he has lost so much money in staging his friends' plays, and then been abused by those very friends afterward when the plays didn't prove successful, that he is fearful of making another mistake."

"Oh, I understand," he said, readily. "If he hadn't known me he would have regarded my tragedy more seriously. He thinks I'm a light fellow."

"That is because you have such a pleasant disposition, Tony," she answered, fondly. "Your friends think that it is enough for you to be just yourself. Don't contradict me. I know."

"Some day, though, they will see that I can do something," he replied. "Don't you want to sing? When I hear music I have fresh visions, and new ideas come to me."

So she went over to the harpsichord and sang a little song Madame had taught her long ago. As her sweet voice rang through the adjoining rooms, the two old friends in the back parlour ceased talking that they might listen.

There was a mirror on the wall back of the harpsichord, and Ann could see the reflection of Mr. Dashwood as he listened, his head flung back, his eyes raised. He was the poet much more than he had ever been her lover, and she had always been

patient and amused when listening to his protestations.

“ Oh, thoughts, no thoughts, but wounds
Sometimes the seat of joy,
Sometimes the chair of quiet rest,
But now of all annoy.

“ Now, Love, where are thy laws
That make thy torments sweet ?
What is the cause that some through thee
Have thought their death but meet ?

“ Thy stately chaste disdain
Thy secret thankfulness,
Thy grace reserved, thy common light
That shines in worthiness.”

Her voice faltered. She could not sing the rest of the verses.

“ That is the way she was, Tony,” she said, half-turning around, her fingers still on the keys, “ never was there any one as good as my dear Madame. It was that way with her, — her grace reserved, her common light that shone in worthiness ! While I was singing I thought how she had never taught me a merry song, but

always sad ones, and now I see that was because her heart was sad."

"Now you sing something, Tony," called in Lady Betty, who never pretended to enjoy Ann's selections.

So he took his place at the keyboard and sang a couple of jolly drinking-songs that he had written and put to music himself. Then he and Ann went back and joined the other two around the open fire, for a rainy evening had made the house chilly.

"I've always been dying to ask you, William," said Lady Betty, "how you ever happened to marry an Indian squaw. I never could get a word out of Ann. She is so close-mouthed."

Ann started and flushed. She was ashamed to lift her eyes, and stared down into her lap.

Sir William took no offence, but laughed heartily. He helped himself to snuff.

"You always had a nose for gossip, Betty. I don't pretend to say I married Mollie Brant entirely for love, though I admit I'm fond of her." He laughed

again. "It strengthened my position with the Indians. A touch o' diplomacy, and Mollie is a handsome squaw — educated, too."

Ann had often longed to ask him of her own young mother, but delicacy at the thought of his second wife restrained her. This last marriage had never been mentioned between them. To her it was disgraceful. She recalled Owhera and his unpleasant fancy for her, and could not help shuddering again at the thought.

She sought to engage in a side conversation with Mr. Dashwood.

"I had a talk with Doctor Johnson at the coffee-house last night," he said, "and he has about convinced me he was right that day in the market."

Her laughter was irresistibly called forth. "What a turncoat you are! Yesterday, or was it the day before? you were all for the Colonies."

"I can't make up my mind about the question," he answered, "I admit I veer about like a weathercock."

"What's that, what's that you say?"

asked Sir William, irritably ; " let me hear your views, sir, if you please."

" Oh, good Lud," cried Lady Betty, impatiently, " finish telling me about Dickie, William. What do we care about the Colonies? Neither you nor I will live to see the result, in all probability."

He turned on her a strange and melancholy look. " No," he said, " I shall never live to see it."

From that time his mood of depression came back and did not lift, so that it was a relief to all when, shortly after, he rose to take Ann home.

He was still in this gloomy condition of mind when he called on her the next afternoon.

Her small parlour adjoined her bedroom. He took a seat at the open window, for the day was clear and warm, after the night of rain, and lighted his pipe.

" Where did you get that ring, Nancy?" he asked.

" It was my mother's," she answered, looking up from her embroidering and

extending her hand unadorned save for an old-fashioned gold ring set by a single sapphire. "Have you forgotten it? Madame gave it to me long ago, but she never would answer any of my questions lest I should become worldly by thinking too much on my mother's grace and beauty."

"There, don't take it off," he said, "I can see well enough."

Remembering how freely Lady Betty had questioned him the night before, she was encouraged to continue the present conversation. "Why is it that this ring has only the date of my mother's death in it and Madame's initials instead of hers?"

"I never knew that," he answered, "let me see." This time he put out his hand for the ring. A heavy sigh escaped him as he turned it over in his palm. There it lay, an imperishable memento of two women, servant and mistress, the former his wife, the latter the self-appointed guardian of his daughters. He recalled that pathetic death-bed marriage, and remembered vaguely that, when the ceremony

called for the ring, Madame Van Vrankin had taken off one she wore and passed it to him. This, then, was that ring. His former dislike for her revived. It was like her, he thought, to have the date inscribed in the ring, a positive record of his wrong-doing. Her initials had doubtless been in at the time, but now, as he read them, he could not help having an enraged feeling as if she had signed them there in witness of that forced and bitter marriage.

He gave the ring back to Ann. Her wide gaze, at once so timid and eager, touched him. He had a sudden realisation of her gentle breeding, her delicacy of soul.

"You grow more like your grandmother all the time, Nancy," he said, sighing, "she had just your expression."

"It seems so sad to have only the date of my mother's death in her ring. There ought to have been the date of her wedding, too," spoke Ann, wistfully.

"Well, well, don't worry about it. It's all past now," he answered, hoping the

significance of that date might be for ever kept from her. "Madame was a queer woman, and she had that put in for some outlandish reason of her own. I have no recollection of it." An inspiration came to him. "Probably she put the date of your mother's death in for some religious reason."

Ann's face cleared. "Why didn't we think of that before?" she cried. "Often Madame talked to me of death, saying that it was not as we were naturally inclined to think. Here in this world, she said, was grief, and the leaving of what we thought life was indeed the passing from death to the real life. Then were we born again."

He nodded. "Of course that was her idea." He could not help laughing, so delighted was he with the ready wit which had suggested an explanation that satisfied her, and relieved him of telling the absolute truth. He lighted his pipe again and puffed away contentedly. This mood of self-congratulation made him unusually communicative.

“Nancy,” he asked, with a kind of grim relish in the story he had to relate, “do you want to know who your sainted Madame was? Own up, my girl. Well, I’ll tell you. She was an Englishwoman, a very vain, worldly woman. Oh, I’m telling you true.” He slapped his knee. “A vain, worldly woman with a heart like flint and a mind like a man’s. Mind you, I don’t deny she was clever.”

“I think I would rather not hear any more,” said Ann. She felt as if she almost disliked her father.

“But I say you shall,” he cried, “I want you to know what she was. She married an Albany Dutchman, as brave a fellow as ever lived. She was a judge of men and not to be taken in. His pockets were lined with gold. There was no woman who dressed, who wore the jewels that she did —”

“Were they her jewels?” cried Ann, “I thought they were my mother’s. I thought she was my mother’s companion.”

Sir William laughed loud and long. “Your mother’s companion! Ay, she

must turn in her grave to hear you say that. No one ever had such stiff-necked pride."

"Then who was my mother?" asked Ann.

His glance of consternation did not escape her. "I have thought lately that you did not wish me to know," she continued, "and no one ever speaks of her to me. Oh, I feel there is something strange and terrible about it all. Perhaps it is like some of the stories I have read. Is she really living and in prison, or is she feeble-witted and been shut away so she might not harm any one?" her voice dying to a whisper. And then the horror her own words conveyed was too much for her self-control. She put her hands over her face. "No, don't tell me. I do not wish to know."

He frowned and shifted in his chair, thoroughly uncomfortable. "There, there," he kept repeating, "there, there, Nancy, don't cry. Look up now. I'm going to tell you the truth. Don't you want to hear?"

"Yes," she whispered, but would not raise her head.

"Your mother was a good woman, but very simple and ignorant. Your sister Peggy resembles her. She was beneath me in birth, however. We were—I scarcely know how to put it—not exactly in the same class of people. It was not the kind of a marriage you, with your girl's ideas, would imagine. She was afraid of me, and I was irritable. In short, Nancy, my dear, to be quite frank, my first wife had been at one time a servant to Madame Van Vrankin." He settled back in his chair and drew a long breath of relief.

Ann was looking apparently unmoved out of the window. For the first time in his life, he wondered what his daughter might think of him. But she was very far from being angry with him; in fact, she had no emotion whatever in regard to her father. She was thinking how her excitable imagination had prepared her for a tragic revelation, and the revelation had been, instead, only a very common and

humiliating story of an unequal marriage. The knowledge seemed to dull her power of feeling. To her vague surprise, she found herself curious as to what else he might have to say.

"What was it you were going to tell me about Madame?" she asked.

"I have forgotten," he replied, lamely, astonished by her question; "let me see, what was I about to say? Oh, yes, I remember." He was alarmed by her strange manner, and feared the news might have affected her mind. "I was going to tell you that she went abroad for awhile, leaving her husband and their little son at home. Van Vrankin didn't wish her to go, but go she would. There never was a woman more set in her ways. Well, he was killed by the Indians, and the baby and its grandparents disappeared. It was believed the three had been massacred."

"Is that all?" asked Ann. She continued to look out of the window, her eyes set in an unblenching stare that saw none of the common street sights below.

"No, the strange part is yet to come," went on Sir William; "life plays us queer tricks. There in Albany her son lived and grew to manhood, and his mother never knew it. It was not until after her death that I learned of this. The old couple, it seemed, had planned a visit to friends in the country, and entrusted the child to the care of a German family, ignorant enough people. Whatever became of the grandparents no one knows to this day. The boy was later adopted by the Claus family, who never knew his real parentage. They were attracted by his size and looks. I remember him as a child. He was always a big fellow, bigger than John. About a year ago the old German sent for me, and confessed that he had kept the child's identity secret to get the money the Claus family paid to adopt him."

"I know who he is," said Ann, in a strained voice. She commenced to weep. "Oh, Madame, Madame," she cried, bitterly, "why did you not take me with you when you died?" Then she remembered her father's presence and strove to control

herself. "My heart aches for Mr. Claus," she said.

"You need shed no tears on his account," retorted Sir William, dryly. "He is hearty and well, much to your loss, too, for his mother had left all her property to you and Peggy." He slapped his knee again, and laughed. "I can't help thinking how tickled she'd be to know how I had been taken in. She always hated me. I can look back now and see that when she jilted me, years ago, she did it with a relish. I never told you, did I, that I let her have full sway over you and your sister on condition that she left you both her money. Lord, how she would enjoy this! But there, Nancy, I have an abundance for my children. I was keeping the fact of your inheritance from her as a surprise for you some day."

"I was not thinking of the property," she answered. "I was wondering why Mr. Claus had never written of this to me."

"For the very best reason in the world," he answered, "he doesn't know it. I never told him. I knew if I did

he would pester me with questions about her, and you know how little desire I have to discuss that woman. However, I have made it all right in my will, and not a cent belonging to his mother's estate will be missing. He'll get it all when I die."

"He should have it now," she said.

Her father rose and took up his hat. "He shall have it soon," he said, "he shall have it soon. Sooner than you think, my girl. It is all right in my will. Don't torment me about it, Nancy. God knows I'm in no humour to stand it."

Chapter XVI

WHEN he had gone Ann went back into her bedchamber to the window that overlooked the garden. Instinct now drew her again to that place where she had known such joy a short time since in the revelation of her love for Claus. Perhaps she felt vaguely that here in this spot, now peculiarly sacred to her love, comfort would come to her. She glanced out and saw the old actor and his wife in the arbour enjoying their afternoon tea. He was reading aloud to her as she sewed. A pink shawl was drawn around her shoulders.

In contrast, there flashed across Ann's mind the thought of her father's married life, — his first wife a servant, his second, an Indian woman. Shame rose in her. She could not bear to look at the serene long-wedded lovers, and so turned away

and went over and lay down on her bed. She tried to imagine her mother, but in vain. She recalled how it had always been said that Peggy was like her mother, but when she tried to put the little maid's likeness on some one else, the resemblance faded to a shadow. She attempted to impress upon her mind the fact that her mother had been a servant, but could not bring herself really to believe it. It seemed so grotesque a jest! She commenced to laugh, then checked herself, conscience-stricken. God would surely punish her for not loving her mother, no matter who she had been. How many times Madame had warned her against unrighteous pride. She knelt down at the side of her bed and prayed to be granted a better heart. But her prayer was mechanical. She buried her face on the coverlet, and wept.

“No, no,” she murmured, “do not take my love from me. I did not love you less, dear Madame, because I thought you were my mother's companion. He should not cease to love me because I am her child. Oh, no, no!”

Voices in the hall below roused her to consciousness of the lateness of the hour, and that she was going to play that evening. She bathed her eyes and went over and sat down at the window. Dusk was blurring the familiar outlines of the garden. The old couple had gone inside. The twilight breeze, rising cool, touched her fevered face. Peace fell upon her spirit. But through sheer nervous weakness an occasional tear rolled down her face. The supper-bell rang, and she went down-stairs.

The Garricks, with their habitual exquisite tact, ignored the fact that she had been weeping. Their glances one to the other might have been interpreted thus :

“That terrible half-Indian father made her weep while here this afternoon. And she so sweet and gentle !”

And little Mrs. Garrick further conveyed her indignation to her husband by scolding the maid sharply because the toast was cold, and ordering a warm piece with marmalade for Ann, to whom this was all so apparent that their kindness, in

her present sensitive mood, proved almost the touch too much for her self-control.

Sir William came to see her play that night, and took her to the coffee-house for lunch afterward. It was not in her nature to judge any one, far less one whom she loved, and so she clung to him in her desolation, and tried to comfort herself by thinking his first marriage was the result of the romantic and foolish love of a young man for one beneath him in station. She felt that they two were banded together against the very memory of his first wife, and felt a mutual resentment toward mentioning her name again. Never before had Sir William and his daughter been in such close sympathy. Each was thankful to the other for not referring to the painful conversation of the afternoon, and in their new-born softness they lingered over their coffee as lovers might, and were reluctant to part when the fleeting hours reminded them of bed. He noticed that she no longer wore the ring.

When she had undressed that night

and knelt again by her bed, she found that she could not pray, and so knew that her heart had become hard and that she was wicked to feel as she did. So she got the ring out again from her jewel-casket, and replaced it on her finger in repentant tenderness. Then she snuffed the candle, and climbed the steps to her high-canopied bed and composed herself to slumber. But she did not fall asleep. Her thoughts became light and fanciful. Charming ideas, snatches of verse and song, floated through her mind. She could not understand this reaction from her mood of sorrow, but lying there on her pillow in the darkness she accepted the change gladly. She tried to think of Mr. Claus, and realise that he was Madame's son, but could not, and instead found herself involuntarily planning a garden of the flowers she loved best. This brought to memory the tulip beds in spring at home, which she and Peggy at Madame's decree had tended so carefully in memory of their dear mother. For she was their dear mother, cried out Ann's heart in sudden

loyal protest, their dear mother, no matter who she had been! She remembered how Madame had told her that she had died very young, and was only a girl in years. Ann could see Peggy so well in fancy, the strong, square little figure, the sky-blue eyes, the rosy skin, and long fair hair. Ah, how could she help but love her mother for the sake of that dear sister who was so like her? All that was protecting in her nature went out to her mother's memory in a wave of tenderness that was born of a kind of impersonal pity rather than love.

Commencing with this night, her mother was ever after vaguely enshrined in Ann's affections as a mere girl, a gentle, timid, far-off likeness of Peggy, early fading out of life, and whose sacredness of motherhood for ever put away all shame of her lowly origin. Yet so instinctive her pride, she never could be convinced in feeling, though she was in mind, that the servant had been her mother. She unconsciously grew to consider herself only her father's daughter.

As she lay now looking at the strip of deep blue that marked the window, the chimes rang out the hour of two. She was very wakeful.

She rose and put on her wrapper and slippers, drew the curtain at her window, and lighted the candles on her table in the next room. Then she sat down to write a letter to Mr. Claus. Her hair had slipped from the pins that held it, and lay, a dark cloud on her shoulders, clad in the blue gown. Her cheeks grew rosy, her eyes shone with the happy excitement of writing to him. She had an entire trust in his love. Was not the fact that she loved him double proof of his love? She told herself now that she had loved him from the first time she saw him, but had not realised it. She wrote him how she had learned of his relation to her beloved Madame, but begged him not to let her father know that she had written, fearing to distress him at a time when he found his other troubles hard to bear. But she felt it was due Mr. Claus to know at once the secret of his own iden-

tity. She wrote till dawn, then brought her letter to a close, sealed and directed it, snuffed the candle, and lay down on the bed once more, too sleepy even to draw the coverlet over her. In a few moments she had passed into profound slumber.

The sun of the late morning was streaming like gold into her room when she woke to find herself lying on the outside of the bed, still begowned and slippered, with her hair tumbling about her shoulders. Some one had been in and thrown an afghan over her that she might not catch cold. Her first thought was of the letter, and she had a momentary thrill of fear to think of all she had been tempted to write, and then felt a rush of relief to know she had not sent it as yet, and could destroy it. She could not help thinking how terrible it would have been if she had sent the letter and unconsciously betrayed her love.

As she lay still drowsy and rosy from slumber, the small servant opened the door softly and peeked in at her, then, seeing that she was awake, hurried away to bring up her breakfast.

When she returned bearing the dainty tray Mrs. Garrick had arranged, and on which Mr. Garrick had laid a posy of pansies, she found Ann standing in the middle of the room with the air of a tragedy queen, speechless with indignation as she pointed to the table.

Rosalie trembled. "I thought, seeing as you wrote it, you wanted it sent, ma'am, and so I gave it to the postboy when he came this morning." The dishes clattered on the tray she held. It had been a habit of Rosalie's to listen in ecstatic awe at the keyhole while the great actor recited his lines, and it needed but a glance from his terrible eyes to impress a reprimand from Mrs. Garrick which otherwise would have gone unheeded. So now, when Ann turned upon her that same dreaded glance, the small maid's soul quaked within her. She set the rattling tray down on a chair, and fled.

The next month Sir William sailed for home. Ann entreated him to allow her to go, too. He refused, confident that the safest and best place for her would be

in England until the trouble with the Colonies had either blown over or been settled. He also expressed his desire that she should leave the stage, but when she objected to being left alone in London, lacking even her beloved profession, he gave in so readily that she was convinced he was, on the whole, indifferent to her, and that his interests lay outside.

When she bade him good-bye at the pier she had a premonition that she would never see him again.

Lady Betty, who came to see her old friend embark, cried bitterly when she said good-bye, and wished him a pleasant voyage.

"The years have gone by so fast, William, and we're nearing the end. We shall never see each other again, and we're the last of the circle. Ah, William, the Irish heart is true to the old days and the old friends."

He bent and kissed her. "Good-bye, Betty. We'll see each other again sometime, and, who knows, Nancy Walton,

too. Cheer up. The next world may find us young again."

Then he turned and kissed his daughter's cold, trembling lips. "Take care of yourself, my girl."

It was a clear, bright day, and the two women watched for long his tall figure at the ship's side, his dark blue cape flapping in the wind and showing the scarlet lining.

Ann grew to feel that if she would ever see her father again she must follow him to America. At last she became deadly homesick, and resolved to disregard his wishes and go home. She announced her intention to Mr. Garrick one afternoon as they sat reading over the manuscript of a new play.

For the first time she encountered his anger. He thrust the manuscript violently aside.

"And pray, Lady Johnson," he cried, harshly, "what is to become of all my instruction?"

Amazed by his manner, his formal address, she stared at him, too dumb-founded to reply.

“Pray, what is to become of my instruction?” he repeated. “What, is all my instruction to be thrown aside, that you may follow out your whim to go home and to leave the stage? I have a new name for you. You shall be called Madame Consideration. How do you like your new name, Lady Johnson?”

Resentment, mingled with compassion for this trembling wrath of old age, rose in her breast. “Mr. Garrick, have I no right to think of my own happiness?”

He made a despairing gesture. “Your own happiness! Ah, what has changed you so? Formerly, your happiness lay in the honour of upholding your great art. I have it! You love some one! But whom? There’s the question.”

“Sir,” said she, with burning face, “you are mistaken.”

“Then what is it?” he cried, piteously. “Ann, Ann, my beloved pupil, are you going to fail the old man? My art, my art, what will become of thee when I am gone? Who will carry on my teachings? The stage will sink to its former

level. What has availed my life-devotion ? ”

He waited her reply, then, as she did not speak, his mood passed from self-pity to rage.

“Ungrateful,” he cried, “I pluck you from my heart. Oh, my Shakespeare, what have I not learned from thee? For what hast thou not prepared me? Behold, I am indeed a Lear in my desolation, but lacking a Cordelia to comfort me. With him can I cry :

“ ‘ You heavens, give me but patience, patience I
need,

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both — ’ ”

“ Mr. Garrick,” cried Ann, indignantly,
“ I am — ”

He raised his trembling hand to silence her.

“ ‘ Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart, and me hold thee
for ever. ’ ”

He paused, choking with emotion. It was his greatest play. Never, even when

the whole house had melted into tears, had he read the lines more splendidly. But now his one hearer sat seemingly unmoved. Chagrined at his failure to touch her heart, the old actor lost all thought of acting. He bowed his head on his arms and wept.

“ ‘ I loved her most and thought to set my rest on her kind nursery,’ ” he murmured.

It was a last appeal. Ann's heart melted. She never could understand why this should have caused her to smile with a certain sad humour. Her own mood, at the time, was such a desolate one. She rose and went around the table and touched his shoulder.

“ My dear master,” she said, gently, “ my dear, good, kind friend, I will remain with you. I will do as you wish.”

He put up his hand to take hers, but did not lift his head. For a little while there was silence. Then at last he looked up. His wonderful eyes glistened with tears, and spoke the gratitude his tongue failed to utter.

After he had gone, she collected the scattered pages of the manuscript and put them in order. Then she put on her bonnet, tying the wide pink ribbons under her chin with habitual carefulness, drew on her black silk mitts, and went down-stairs to the basement to get her dog, an Italian greyhound. It was a gift from Mr. Dashwood, and had a silver plate bearing its name on its collar.

She went for a long walk in the park, and came back to dinner calmed and refreshed, with a lofty serenity of soul. She felt that, in some way, her sacrifice to Mr. Garrick atoned for her one disobedience to Madame.

Chapter XVII

SIGNS of trouble with the Colonies grew more portentous. Claus, receiving Ann's letter at this time when all was anxiety, for war seemed inevitable, was obliged to curb his impulse to go to her. The arrival of her letter, aside from its contents, was a surprise. It was so long since he had heard from her, that, despairing, he had schooled himself to renounce all hope. His servant brought it to him as he sat alone in the library at Johnson Hall reading some speeches by public men, that had appeared in the newspapers, and which he had missed at the time of their publication by absence in the north, where there had been fresh conflict between the settlers and the Indians. He had returned much depressed, having lost a number of the men who had gone up with him. Whichever way he turned,

disaster pressed in upon the Americans. He heard often from Sir William, who wrote frankly of the state of things in England, and deplored the obstinate, short-sighted policy of George III. As Ann was always wistful of hearing her father speak of Claus, though it were no more than to mention his name, so the young man on his part invariably glanced first down Sir William's written pages to see if they contained that beloved name.

"A letter for me, Cæsar?" he said, taking it from the negro. As he glanced at the address and recognised the handwriting, a thrill of anticipation ran through him. For a moment he held it silently, mingled emotions rising in his breast, then put it in his pocket and rose. He would not read it here.

He ordered the slave to saddle his horse for him. "I do not want you this afternoon, Cæsar," he added.

The disappointed Cæsar watched his master take the road to Johnson Castle. When he was out of sight, the negro mounted and followed at a discreet dis-

tance. He was all agog with curiosity, for it was long since he had been ordered to remain at home while his master went abroad.

Claus rode slowly, postponing the moment when the opening of the letter should risk the dreamlike happiness into which its coming had thrown him. It meant so much that she should even write to him after her long silence, that this alone contented him for the present. He could not know that the sudden revelation to herself of her love for him had made her timid and afraid to write lest he might divine her secret, and that the letter he now held had been written on impulse, and been posted without her knowledge.

Sadness crept over him as he approached the castle. How far the fairy princess of his boyish dreams had wandered! He felt he had become careworn and worldly, the meaner duties of every day for ever holding him from his greater aspirations, even from seeing her. For he had to face the fact that he was a poor man, and that his first duty, if he would

ever marry, was to assure himself of his livelihood.

The heavy gate to the stone wall was closed, but he had a key, and dismounting, he tied his horse, and unlocking the gate, went inside. The sun was shining warm and bright on the stone bench where Naukoska, toothless old watch-dog, had sat so many years. Here he seated himself. Still he hesitated to open the letter. He gave himself up to memories bitter-sweet. His gaze wandered over the Castle front. There at the upper window, now so inimically barred, had once gleamed the candle by whose light he and Peggy had found Ann dancing. He recalled his conversation with Madame Van Vrankin, that strange and admirable gentlewoman, how he had stood on the snow outside after she had bidden him good night, and watched the yellow gleam in the window, and listened to the musical tinkling of Ann's spinet. Back of the castle he knew full well how deserted and overgrown by weeds and briars the garden was. The once carefully tended

tulip beds planted by the High Dutch girl were heaped with drifts of decaying leaves. Last spring he had ridden over, and found a few blossoms.

Reluctantly, for he had a premonition of the death of his hopes, he broke the seal of the little letter.

He commenced reading it, and when he had finished his world had turned around. He who had been Daniel Claus was in reality the son of that brave soldier, Peter Stuyvesant Van Vrankin. And his mother, the pale, cold Madame who had watched over Ann's girlhood. At first the knowledge dazed him. When he could again think clearly he found his mind reverting, not to the hours spent with Ann, but going over that never-to-be-forgotten and now sacred meeting with Madame. He recalled her pleasure when he had mentioned the bravery of her husband; again he followed her down the stairs to the room below, saw her set the candle on the table and vanish in the darkness beyond the circle of light to bring him back wine and cake and fruit;

heard once more the sweet and subtle charm of her voice. How heartily he had accorded her the enthusiastic admiration of a young man as she sat opposite talking to him, no longer a saint, but revealing herself a witty and worldly person !

He re-read Ann's letter and a sense of comfort stole over him. Was it not Ann who of her own sweet will had written to him this priceless secret? Love for her alone filled his heart. The knowledge of his parents grew vague and like a dream. Again he was Daniel Claus, with his old ambitions strengthened. He went around to the garden and found a single scarlet tulip blowing among the weeds and plucked it. Poor little High Dutch girl, he thought, who had known no lover but a tyrant ! And she, he had always known, was Ann's mother. How unimportant this question of parentage seemed ! Ann and he were in the world together, and that being so, what mattered it how or why they came? Only let them be once more with each other, cried his heart. Before going, he went inside the Castle and wan-

dered through the desolate rooms. He went up-stairs to the drawing-room. There was the embroidery-frame, a sheet flung over it to protect the work. He drew off the cover. There were his mother's stitches set in in the colours she loved ; the purple that was as the twilight ; the blue, like the sky at noon ; the green, tender and clear as the green of spring ; the glory of the scarlet colour that was best. Had not Ann, working to finish the uncompleted work after Madame's death, told him all this ? The pictures, the books, and furniture were covered with dust, and the room had a musty odour from being closed for so long. He opened Ann's spinet. The yellowed ivory keys were also thick with dust. He touched them. The sweet tinkle sounded remote like an echo from the past. All was desolation. The tears sprang to his eyes. " Oh, my darling," he cried, " shall I ever see you again ? "

But when he had once more mounted his horse and turned homeward, the precious letter warm against his breast, his

hope revived and brought him an almost wild happiness. Through the sunset woods at a turn of the road he caught a glimpse of a galloping steed bearing the ludicrous figure of Cæsar, the tails of the blue coat lined with canary satin, that had been Sir John's, flying in the wind. He was hurrying to get home before his master.

Claus, indulgent now to all the world, smiled. He saw the faint silver crescent of the new moon high above the yellow west. Ah, little moon, he thought, sailing so serenely, what had she not brought him !

He wrote to Ann that night, pouring out his gratitude, his devotion, the thoughts that had been his that afternoon. But the letter so freighted with love, and the tulip he enclosed, was doomed never to reach her, and was lost in transportation. He told her that as soon as Sir William returned he would obtain leave to go to see her in London. But when his patron did at last return, sorely distressed in mind, he needed all the younger man's help and advice. John was as a broken reed to lean upon, and was

enjoying a gay visit with his wife at her old home in New York. Peggy was with them.

The Hall was indescribably gloomy. The two men often sat in almost unbroken silence at their meals together, awaiting the turn of public affairs. The trouble between the Tories and Whigs was now extending among the Indians, and it was growing to be a serious question as to the side the savages would take. Men of the opposing parties sought Sir William at various times to find out on which side he would throw his influence with the Indians. The Whigs, while believing that outwardly he was loyal to George III., yet cherished the thought that he secretly sympathised with them, and when the time ripened would come out boldly for their interest.

The Tories were confident of his allegiance to the Crown, but could not force him to a positive declaration of the stand he would maintain.

Matters with the Indians came to a sudden climax, owing to the brutal and

unwarranted murder of one of their chiefs, who had been openly friendly and devoted to the white men that betrayed him.

The immense influence Sir William exerted over the People of the Long House was now made apparent. Instead of rushing to massacre, they came first to him for his advice, knowing he had never treated them falsely. As fast as the chiefs arrived, he saw each one privately and persuaded him to refrain from war, trusting to him, Sir William, to see that justice was done. Nearly six hundred Indians came, many of them travelling from great distances. Again, as so often in the past, the hospitable doors of the Hall were flung wide, and bountiful entertainment set before the dark, sombre guests who came hurrying, bearing hearts in which smouldered hatred and lurking revenge.

War had already broken out in Virginia. The news first reached Sir William and young Captain Claus as they sat at breakfast at a long table with some of the Indians. The bearer was from Albany.

The old baronet showed his first sign of emotion in the presence of the savages. He groaned aloud. "It is the beginning of the end."

That day he went to his bed sick. The next day, which was Saturday, he rose and attended the council which was held in a natural clearing in the forest back of the Hall. Several great warriors spoke.

Fortunately, Sunday intervened, giving Sir William a day in which to rest and to prepare his answer. He spent most of the day in the library, looking over and arranging some papers with the help of Claus. In the morning he held a short service from the prayer-book, for those Indians that were Christianised, and ordered games started for the general entertainment in the afternoon. He spoke several times of John, wishing that he were home. His handsome Indian wife remained in the library with him and Captain Claus. In exploring his personal belongings, he came across a string of beads that had gotten into his drawer by some chance.

“Something for you, Mollie,” he said, and tossed them over to his wife. But she, proud as himself, her quick mind having gained that he had only contempt for her race’s love of ornament, let the beads drop to the floor, and continued unmoved her weaving of sweet-grass into a basket.

At this he laughed for the first time in many days.

The day had been almost unbearably warm. In the evening a thunder-storm came up. Claus stood at a window and watched it, finding a sympathy in nature with his restless and gloomy mood. He had not received Ann’s answer to his letter. There had been time for it to have reached him had she replied within the month.

Sir William gave his answer the next day, speaking for several hours in a hot July sun with the full force of his old-time eloquence. He pleaded with the Indians not to rush into war, but to await the course of law, and strove to impress upon them that he would see justice done. When he had finished it was noon. The

Indians then went to have their midday meal and to smoke, spending the afternoon in conference over the answer they wished to make.

But Sir William never heard their reply. He became suddenly faint and turned to his young *aide*, who supported him to his room, where he lay down. Neither thought his attack serious, but he did not wish to be left alone. Claus sat by the window and watched the glowing afternoon pass away. He could not put his mind on reading nor did he care to smoke. He thought that he would like to ask Sir William more of Madame Van Vrankin, whom he never could bring himself to realise was his mother. But he remembered Ann's warning not to worry her father by any questions. Toward sunset Sir William called him.

"Tell John," he said, "to take sides with —"

But whether with his king or with the Colonies none ever knew, for he died before evening with the sentence unfinished.

Chapter XVIII

ANN learned first of her father's death through the newspaper. Later, she received a letter from John giving details of the sad event as he had had them from Claus. He concluded the letter with expressions of loyalty to the king, writing with bitterness of the enemies to the Crown, and telling her of a reckless plan he had in mind to lead the Iroquois up into Canada and start a settlement anew. He did not mention any plan that Captain Claus might have. Ann waited wistfully to hear from her lover. Sometimes she thought he never could have received her letter. She was saddened, but did not grieve over her father's death. The real pang of parting from him had been when he bade her farewell for the last time. She felt then she would never see him again. Her sorrow was for his sake,

that he had passed away in such a troubled state of mind, and with John absent.

Never had she been more conscientious in her work than now. Since the renunciation of her own desire to go home, she had experienced a sense of strong and lofty purpose. She comprehended now more fully what the devotion to a cause rather than to a personal motive meant. Her father's anguish at the rebellion of his country against his king, Garrick's life-giving devotion to the stage, she understood and sympathised with. But her own heart held one secret cry, that, whatever happened, she might see Claus once more.

Lately, too, she had begun to feel that her sacrifice to Mr. Garrick had not been really necessary to his happiness, for he now gave all his attention to the little orange-girl, who had been in his class for children. The girl was already old enough to take minor parts on the stage. She was exceedingly pretty and roguish. Her mere appearance, however, gave small

suggestion of the undoubted genius that was hers.

"Your little protégée is going far beyond me," said Ann, to the old actor. "Soon I must needs give way to her."

"She can never have your charm," he answered, "your lovely face!"

"Ah, yes," she said, "she has far more fire and force than I."

"She can never be as genteel," he protested.

Ann made him a curtsy. "Gentility without the ability," she retorted, merrily. "As they used to say, I thank you on the knees of my heart." And putting her hands over her ears, to tease the old man still further by refusing to listen to his gallant, fond protest, she ran out of the doorway. Nevertheless, each, despite the amiable jesting, was conscious that the little pleasantry held a sting of truth.

Some nights later, the Garricks and Ann attended the royal drawing-room. As usual, they had music first, and then tea. Ann, longing to be alone, stood half behind a curtain, listening pensively to the

music. She heard snatches of conversation near by, and gathered that a noted Indian fighter was to have an audience with his Majesty at nine o'clock. She experienced a renewed interest in the evening, and wondered if the stranger might not, in all probability, be able to tell her of her father, or, perchance, — and her colour grew bright at the thought, — she might lead the conversation, with seeming carelessness, up to the subject of Captain Claus.

As she thus mused happily on an imaginary conversation, she became conscious of a wave of excitement and expectancy in the room, and she, too, turned eagerly to catch sight of the American.

A young man, wearing the uniform of a captain, was making his way through the gay court. She recognised Mr. Claus, his head held high, slightly pale beneath his bronzed skin. She saw him cast a swift and eager glance about him. She could not know the pallor, the glance, were for her sake. He felt, without being able to place it, her presence.

The room grew dark to her eyes; a thousand murmurs rang in her ears. She struggled to regain her self-control, fearing she might faint. After a little she grew calm, and was able to watch him. He was listening to George III., who appeared to be talking with some excitement. She saw him cast a swift glance to his right, although his head was attentively bent. All at once she knew that he had come for her, and now looked to see where she might be. She shrank back into the heavy folds of the velvet curtain. Her heart throbbed with a strange fear such as she had never before known. She saw Mr. and Mrs. Garrick across the room, and tried to make her way over to them without being observed.

Her progress was interrupted by a group of people, and as she stood waiting they suddenly parted to enable two gentlemen to pass to her. The two were his Majesty and Captain Claus.

“This gentleman has a message from your father for you,” said George III. She was a favourite with the kind and

simple monarch, who saw in her not only an accomplished actress of unimpeachable character, but also the daughter of one whom he felt had been his most loyal subject in America and on whom he had showered numerous gifts and favours. He had sent a message of condolence to Sir William's daughter on hearing of her loss. He was simple and devout as a country parson, and his religious convictions were firmly rooted in his nature. But meeting her now for the first time since her father's death, he was embarrassed, finding it difficult to express his sympathy, and was sorry to note that she was white as if she had been ill.

"Well, well," he said, "'twas a very sad shock. Well, well, well!" He sighed deeply, coughed slightly, and moved away.

Ann had made Mr. Claus a deep curtsy without raising her eyes. But now she ventured to look at him.

"Permit me to trust that you had a pleasant voyage, sir," said she, flushing rosily.

"Voyage," he said. "What voyage? Oh, yes, of course! Oh, a very pleasant voyage, madam." Since she had not answered his last letter, he was all for doubting her love, and gazed down on her anxiously.

"'Pon my soul, a most magnificent figure," remarked some one, in an audible aside.

She turned and saw Mr. Garrick, who never could bear to be on the outside of anything, and who, perceiving that the American was to be the lion of the evening, had made his way over and spoken thus to attract attention.

Ann introduced the two at once.

"Do tell me, Captain Claus," said Mr. Garrick, twirling his pince-nez, "is it true that you Americans scalp each other in an affair of honour?"

"Sir!" cried Mr. Claus.

"Of course," continued the actor, airily, "I don't presume to say so, only, you know, people will say such things nowadays."

"I — really, I have never looked into

the matter," answered Mr. Claus, in obvious distress, his gaze following Ann, who had slipped away and left them talking.

She was trembling and afraid to stay. She had her chair called, and went home, leaving word for Mrs. Garrick that she was suddenly indisposed.

Little Mrs. Garrick, returning late, came tiptoeing down the hall to knock at her door and to inquire how she was.

"I was very tired, but I feel better now," she answered.

"Then don't get up to let me in," spoke Mrs. Garrick through the keyhole. "I am satisfied to know you rest comfortably; for there are times, my love, when you look that pale, I think you are passing into a gentle decay."

"Oh, Lud, ma'am, I hope not," cried Ann, with pretended spirit. Long after the rest of the household slept, she lay sobbing for the humiliation that filled her as she recalled how she had acted that evening. Had she not conducted herself in a most absurd manner, paling, trembling,

then fleeing ignominiously away, without a word or an invitation to call, to one who had the right to expect that she should accord him every courtesy? She shed tears anew to think that, in all probability, it was he whom Rosalie had told her had called that morning, and she had been shopping. Then she became angry with the little servant. Why had she been so stupid as not to tell her young mistress that the stranger looked like no one else in the world, was indeed the one person whose coming was longed for? Then she wondered why he had not left his name and a message. She doubted if he would ever come again, and was filled with despair. Fresh cause for alarm awoke in the fear that she had betrayed her love and inspired him with pity.

“Alas!” she murmured, “he probably visits me with lofty disdain. ’Tis most humiliating to a woman of spirit. I trust that he will come to see me that I may flout him. He properly deserves it!”

She waited all the next morning, but he did not come. Then she did not think it

fitting that she should seem to wait at home for him any longer, so she decided to go over to the park which was near by. She took her dog with her, and flung around her shoulders a long mantle of cherry-coloured velvet, for there was a touch of autumn in the summer air. She left word with Rosalie that Captain Claus might possibly, but only very possibly, come across her in the park, where she had gone to read her lines, but should Mr. Dashwood call she was not to be found.

She made her way to a sequestered little arbour, so shady that the dew of morning still sparkled here and there. She had taken with her the play, *PHILASTER*; *or, Love-Lies-a-Bleeding*, and she paced up and down, her eyes attentive upon the pages of her open book, reading her lines aloud with care. Every time she turned at the end of the arbour she would glance swiftly up. She looked to sight Mr. Claus at a distance off through the trees, and thus be allowed a moment's time in which to compose herself before he should reach her.

“ I am in tune to hunt (she read aloud),
Diana, if thou canst rage with a maid,
As with a man, let me discover thee,
Bathing, and turn me to a fearful hind,
That I may die pursued by cruel hounds,
And leave my story — ”

Here she turned. At the end of the
harbour stood Mr. Claus.

Alas for all pretensions ! farewell to all
floutings !

“ ‘ And leave my story written in my
wounds,’ ” she repeated, mechanically,
and faltered, blushed, and then stood
still.

And he, made all daring by her timid-
ity, went forward and, perceiving how she
trembled, seated himself on the rustic
bench and drew her down beside him.
Those first few moments were too filled
with longing, with turnings to the past,
to be joyous. Their very caresses were
slight, clinging and wistful. He could
only kiss her hand, and lay it against his
face. And she crept close within his arm.

“ To think of the years that have passed
since I last saw you,” he said, “ and I had

hoped to follow you so soon, my dearest." His heart contracted with pain as he looked at her. She was so very delicate, so appealing in her fragility. The disordered masses of her black hair shaded her lovely face as she rested her head upon his breast. "To think you never received my letter," he added, musingly, for she had told him of her wonder at not hearing from him.

"But now I know," she answered, satisfied, smiling. These moments were filled with such tremulous happiness! She had even wept a little on his shoulder.

They spoke of Madame Van Vrankin. Later, when the trouble with the Colonies was settled, Claus would take steps to have his father's name restored to him. They were both conscious that there was much for them to say to each other, many explanations to be made. But now they were content merely to be together.

Twilight gathered around them. She looked up at him, smiling as she spoke of her terror on meeting him the night before. They were alone together as he

had dreamed, she sweetly smiling, sweetly talking, as he had pictured her. Was it the dusk that gave him courage, was it her lifted eyes? He bent and gave her their first kiss.

“What shall I call you, sir?” asked she, “do you know what your first name rightfully is? It would not be wifely that I should call you only Captain Van Vrankin!”

“Your father’s will gave my name in full,” he answered, “a fine Dutch name, — Peter Stuyvesant Van Vrankin.”

“Dear Lud!” cried Ann, aghast, then hid her laughing, blushing face upon his sleeve. “Forgive me that I laugh,” she murmured; “my pride did even scruple to have my lover’s name Daniel, but now indeed am I properly punished, for it turns out to be Peter.”

He caught her and kissed her warmly. “You are a witch, I swear, Ann!”

Her arms went tight around him. “Oh, why did you not come before, sir? I have been so lonely,” she cried, and fell to sobbing.

"Hush, hush, my dearest," he begged, "I will never leave you again."

The park had grown dark and still. Her dog came back, and rubbed its cold nose against her hand, and whined for attention, and not receiving it, lay down at their feet on the edge of her gown.

"Sir," said Ann, solemnly, holding his hand tightly, "did you ever feel that sometimes those that we love, but who are dead, are near us?"

"I have not felt that," he answered, "but I know what you mean. Often, these years, when I have been so far from you, I have thought and thought of you until I seemed to have drawn your spirit to me."

She nodded. "Sir," she whispered, "I feel as if Madame, your mother, were near us, and my father, too, and that they see and bless us."

A tremor passed over him. He drew her closer.

The rising wind of night rustled in the trees.

"Hush," said Ann, fancifully, "it is

the spirit of old Naukoska whispering."

"My darling," he cried, "you must not talk so. You fill me with terror. Sometimes I think I but dream that you are a woman of flesh and blood. Come, it is late. I'll not take you home yet, but to a quiet inn where we shall break bread together. I fear we have lingered too long in this damp place."

He felt for her book, which had dropped on the grass, and found it and put it in his pocket. He wrapped her cloak around her and tied the ribbons of her bonnet under her chin. He could scarcely see her pale little face in the dimness.

"Dear one," he said, jestingly, "are you properly humbled by love? Will you knit a pair of good woollen stockings for your Albany Dutchman?"

"But mine must always be of silk," she said.

They made their way out of the park, the dog eager to go, running ahead and then returning to leap upon them. As they closed the gate, Ann took her com-

panion's arm, then turned and waved her handkerchief.

“Farewell, dear park,” she cried, “farewell. May your arbours be kind to many lovers!”

THE END.

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